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"Please Do Not Feed the Homeless:" The Role of Stereotyping and Media Framing on the Criminalization of Homelessness

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**"PLEASE DO NOT FEED THE HOMELESS:" THE ROLE OF
STEREOTYPING AND MEDIA FRAMING ON THE CRIMINALIZATION
OF HOMELESSNESS**

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

PSYCHOLOGY

by

Shirley V. Truong

December 2012

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"Please Do Not Feed the Homeless:" The Role of Stereotyping and Media Framing

on the Criminalization of Homelessness

Shirley V. Truong

Abstract

Homelessness is a critical social and economic problem in the U.S., with

approximately 3.5 million people experiencing homelessness in a given year

(National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty [NLCHP], 2004). Over the past

25 years, many U.S. cities have adopted increasingly punitive policies (e.g., sleeping

bans, restrictions on sharing food with homeless people) to address rising rates of

homelessness and people living in public spaces (National Coalition for the Homeless

[NCH], 2006). Media representations of homelessness play an important role in

fostering support for anti-homeless ordinances (e.g., Kendall, 2005; Iyengar, 1990).

This study examined media framing of homeless people and policies related

to homelessness in five U.S. cities. Los Angeles, Atlanta, and Orlando were selected

for analysis based on their ranking as three of the top "ten meanest cities" for

homeless people in the report, *Homes not Handcuffs: The Criminalization of

Homelessness in U.S. Cities* (NLCHP & NCH, 2009). Two progressive cities,

Portland and Seattle, were chosen as contrasts to these "mean" cities. A content

analysis of 402 newspaper articles and 184 editorials and op-eds from key periods

surrounding the passage of restrictive homeless ordinances in each city was

conducted. The overarching goals of the analysis were twofold: (1) to deconstruct the

framing of homelessness in mainstream newspapers; and (2) to offer a social

psychological analysis of relationships among stereotypes, attributions for homelessness, and the criminalization of homelessness. Findings indicate that homeless people were frequently described in terms of stigmatized characteristics (e.g., mentally ill) and behaviors (e.g., substance use, crime), while positive characterizations (e.g., hardworking) were rare. Moreover, policy discussions tended to focus on individual behaviors (e.g., panhandling, sleeping outdoors) rather than structural causes of homelessness (e.g., lack of affordable housing). Supporters of anti-homeless ordinances relied on stereotypes of homelessness and framed the issue as crime prevention and addressing public safety and health. Critics maintained that the policies violated civil liberties and emphasized the need for structural-level solutions. Implications for people experiencing homelessness and the consequences of restrictive homeless policies are discussed. These findings contribute to the growing social science literature examining relationships among media framing, stereotyping, and social policy and have direct relevance to advocacy efforts to reform homeless policies.

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Introduction

With the U.S. housing crisis deepening and homelessness rising (U.S. Conference of Mayors, 2008), the criminalization of homelessness is an issue of growing concern among poverty scholars and advocates. Over the last 25 years, cities in the U.S. have grown increasingly punitive toward homelessness and people living in public spaces (NCH, 2006) instead of addressing the underlying structural causes of homelessness (e.g., shortage of affordable housing, low-wage work).

The mainstream news media is one way that the public learns about social issues such as homelessness. Media plays a powerful role in shaping public perceptions about the causes of and the solutions to political and economic issues (Iyengar, 1990). Poverty and homelessness tend to be portrayed in the media as an individual rather than a structural problem (Iyengar, 1990; Kendall, 2005). When media frames predominately focus on personal characteristics and behaviors, particularly "deviancy," responsibility for homelessness is likely placed on homeless people themselves rather than structural causes. This, in turn, influences support for housing and homeless policy.

With approximately 3.5 million people experiencing homelessness each year, and an estimated 12.5 million households at high risk of becoming homeless (NLCHP, 2004), a deeper understanding of how media depictions of homelessness contribute to policies that restrict homeless people from performing life-sustaining activities, such as sleeping or sitting, is crucial. The overarching goals of this analysis are twofold: (1) to deconstruct the framing of people who are homeless and

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homelessness in mainstream U.S. media; and (2) to offer a social psychological analysis of the relationship between stereotypes, attributions for homelessness, and the criminalization of homelessness.

The following chapters outline background information and research relevant to the present study. Chapter 1 provides an overview of how homelessness is defined by the federal government, demographics of the homeless population, and the causes of homelessness. In addition, the growing trend of criminalizing homelessness is discussed. Chapter 2 focuses on theoretical perspectives that inform the current study, namely stereotype research, attribution theory, media framing research, and critical race theory. Chapter 3 provides an overview of the current study and the methods and materials used. All five U.S. cities examined in this study and their policies associated with homelessness are summarized in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 discusses the research findings and implications for public policy. Finally, Chapter 6 offers insights for future research directions.

Chapter One

Trends in Homelessness in the United States

How is Homelessness Defined?

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines a homeless person as "an individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence" (2009, para. 2). This includes individuals who have a primary nighttime residence that is:

> A supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for [people with mental illness]), an institution that provides temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized or a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings. (HUD, 2009, para. 2)

Individuals who are incarcerated in U.S. jails or prisons, or are otherwise detained pursuant to state or Congressional law, do not meet HUD's criteria for defining homelessness.

A major criticism of HUD's definition of homelessness is that it excludes insecurely housed individuals and groups, resulting in underestimates of homelessness and difficulties obtaining services. Homeless advocates argue for an expanded definition of homelessness, which includes individuals and families who are living in motels, automobiles, or "doubling up" with family members or friends

and sharing crowded, temporary living arrangements. People in these circumstances are less likely to be included in estimates of the number of people experiencing homelessness. For example, the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (as cited by NCH, 2009, para. 3) reported that only 22% of homeless children lived in shelters, while 65% were doubled-up with relatives or friends, and 13% lived in motels and other locations. Moreover, these "hidden" homeless may be denied assistance or access to certain programs. Children in families that are doubling up with others or living in motels may not be acknowledged as homeless and are sometimes denied access to the protections and services of the McKinney-Vento Act (NCH, 2007a), a set of programs designed to assist homeless people in obtaining emergency shelter, temporary housing, health care, education, job training, and in some cases, permanent housing (NCH, 2008a). Other "hidden" homeless (i.e., people living in their vehicles, abandoned buildings, camping in tents or boxes) are often overlooked in homeless counts.

Who are the Homeless?

Given the challenges in obtaining accurate estimates of homelessness, researchers use different methodologies to estimate prevalence rates. Using a "period prevalence count," the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty (2004) reports that approximately 3.5 million people, 1.35 million of whom are children, are likely to experience homelessness in a given year. A "point-in-time count" reveals that on any given day, as many as 745,000 people are homeless in the United States (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2007). Prior to the Great Recession, the

number of people experiencing homelessness was rising. In a 2007 survey of 25 U.S. cities, a 12% increase in homelessness was reported (U.S. Conference of Mayors, 2008). Current estimates suggest even higher prevalence rates. A report by the Human Services Agency in San Francisco showed a 2% increase in homelessness from 2007 (Knight, 2009); Boston's homeless count increased by 11% from 2007; and in the Seattle, Washington area, street homelessness rose 2%, while homelessness in the suburbs (described as people living in their cars) increased by an alarming 40% (Koch, 2009).

Most attempts to document homeless prevalence rates are point-in-time counts, however, it is important to note that point-in-time counts are limited in accuracy and capturing the scope of homelessness. Point-in-time studies provide a "snapshot" picture of homelessness and only account for people who are homeless at a single point in time, usually during one particular day or one specific night. These counts are often criticized for inaccurate estimates (e.g., difficulty locating "hidden" homeless) and misrepresenting the nature of homelessness (e.g., long-term vs. short-term homelessness; NCH, 2007a). This method overlooks people who may experience intermittent homelessness, which can lead to overestimates of "chronically" homeless women and men and can therefore contribute to overestimates of problems associated with chronic homelessness (e.g., mental illness, substance abuse).

It is particularly important to discuss the demographic composition of those experiencing homelessness. Contrary to popular opinion, the homeless population in

the U.S. is heterogeneous. Nationally, an estimated 51% of the homeless are single men, 17% single women, and 2% are unaccompanied youth (U.S. Conference of Mayors, 2005). Veterans are estimated to comprise 13% of the homeless population (U.S. Conference of Mayors, 2008). An increasing number of families are homeless (NCH, 2008a). Families with children are among the fastest growing segments of the homeless population, with one survey estimating that families are approximately 30% of the homeless population (U.S. Conference of Mayors, 2005). Female-headed households with young children are disproportionately represented among the homeless (Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, 2007). In 2003, children under 18 accounted for 39% of the homeless population and 42% of these children were under the age of five (NLCHP, 2004). It is also the case that homeless families are more likely than poor families to be families of Color. According to the National Survey of Homeless Assistance Providers and Clients, 62% of homeless families, compared with 24% of the general population, were members of ethnic minority groups (Burt et al., 1999). Domestic violence is also a significant contributor to homelessness. Between 39 to 50% of homeless mothers in the U.S. cited domestic violence as the primary cause of homelessness (U.S. Conference of Mayors, 2007; Zorza, 1991; National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 2001).

With a significant number of individuals and families experiencing homelessness, it is not only important to understand the gravity of the issue of homelessness, but also to dispel myths about who is homeless. The U.S. Conference of Mayors' *Hunger and Homelessness in U.S. Cities* report (2010) documents that

19% of adults experiencing homelessness are employed, 20% are physically disabled, between 26 to 37% of the single adult homeless population suffer from substance addictions, and 20 to 25% suffer from some form of severe and persistent mental illness (U.S. Conference of Mayors, 2006; 2007; 2010). Nevertheless, widespread stereotypes associate homelessness with laziness, substance abuse, and mental illness (Whaley & Link, 1998; Amster, 2003; Somerman, 1993; Knecht & Martinez, 2009; Sy, 2009). As homelessness continues to rise, mainstream media has the potential to combat popular misperceptions by focusing on the structural causes of homelessness or reify individualistic understandings of the issues.

Causes of Homelessness

　　　Structural causes. A number of complex, intersecting structural factors contribute to homelessness including the unavailability of living wage work, declining government assistance and social services, and the lack of affordable housing and health care. There are not enough living wage jobs in the U.S. to support individuals and families seeking work (Rank, Yoon, & Hirschl, 2003). Movement from manufacturing-based work to service-based work, with related changes in the types of jobs available and corresponding wages, contribute to economic instability and homelessness (Anderson & Collins, 2004). Additionally, jobs are outsourced internationally as large corporations seek to increase profits by cutting labor costs (Anderson & Collins, 2004). This has resulted in increasingly larger numbers of low paying jobs, increased non-standard work, such as temporary or part-time work, and jobs without benefits (Seccombe, 2000; Mishel, Bernstein, & Schmitt, 1999; Rank et

al., 2003). In 2012, hourly workers earned an average of $10.19 an hour and approximately 8.2 million Americans were working part-time as a result of the lack of sufficient full-time work being available (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012a; 2012b). Many employees lack health insurance primarily because employers do not provide such benefits (Rank et al., 2003). This is particularly troublesome in cases in which a high risk of injury or exposure to toxic chemicals is pivotal to the work. For example, farm laborers are exposed to herbicides and pesticides while working in the fields and factory workers are exposed to chemical compounds, nuclear radiation, or asbestos fibers working in high-risk plants and factories (Eitzen & Smith, 2009). Full-time, low wage work often does not produce sufficient wages to cover basic necessities (e.g., adequate housing, food, transportation) for individuals and families. The federal minimum wage, despite small increases over time, has not kept pace with inflation. From 1968 to 2009, wages have experienced a loss of over 30% in purchasing power (Eitzen & Smith, 2009). The current federal minimum wage increased from $6.55 to $7.25 in July 2009. However, a person working 40 hours a week for 52 weeks at the higher rate would only earn $13,920 a year, which is well below the poverty threshold for a family of three (i.e., $19,090) consisting of one parent and two children (U.S. Department of Labor, 2009; Eitzen & Smith, 2009; U.S. Census Bureau, 2011).

The shortage of living wage work in the U.S. is further compounded by the lack of a strong safety net. The monthly maximum Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) benefits for a family of three (i.e., one parent with two children) are

less than half of the federal poverty level and less than the HUD Fair Market rent for a two-bedroom apartment (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities [CBPP], 2010). According to the National Coalition for the Homeless (2007b), TANF benefits and food stamps combined are below the national poverty thresholds in every state. In California, where the cost of living is especially high, the maximum annual cash assistance (known as the CalWORKs program) for a family of three is $8,448 and the annual maximum for food stamps for the same size family is $4,896, for a combined total of $13,344 (National Center for Children in Poverty, 2009a; 2009b). Even so, with no other sources of income, these families would remain below federal poverty guidelines. Moreover, most families do not receive upper limits of assistance. In California, for instance, average food stamp benefits received per household is approximately $200 per month or $2,400 annually, bringing the total annual benefits to even lower levels (California Department of Social Services, 2009). While welfare reform policies have been successful in reducing the number of families receiving government assistance (e.g., Lichter & Jayakody, 2002; Meyer & Cancian, 1997), research shows that the majority of families that have left the welfare rolls are not faring well (Seccombe, 2007). As Anderson and Collins (2004) observe, "Studies show that increases in family income among former welfare recipients are meager, and there has been an increase in the number of such families evicted from housing because of falling behind on rent" (p. 80). Families also report an increase in other hardships such as phones and utilities being turned off (Anderson & Collins, 2004).

Compared to other Western industrialized countries, the U.S. provides significantly less funding to programs that aid economically vulnerable people (Rank et al., 2003). For example, only 40% of workers are eligible for unemployment assistance following job loss in the U.S. (Anderson & Collins, 2004). In contrast, many European countries offer a variety of social programs and generous unemployment assistance to help keep individuals and families from being at risk for poverty. As such, U.S. social policies and programs in combination with the lack of living wage work do little to prevent people from falling into poverty and potentially losing the ability to secure basic necessities (e.g., phone, utilities) and housing.

The shortage of affordable housing is a major contributor to homelessness in the United States. As the economic recession of the 1980s increased the need for affordable housing, the number of affordable housing units declined (Aguirre & Brooks, 2001). Government programs designated for redevelopment or new construction of low-cost housing were largely eliminated and existing public housing was demolished, sold, abandoned, or converted to market rate housing (Aguirre & Brooks, 2001). There is now a widening gap between the number of affordable housing units and the number of people in need. In the U.S., over 36 million households rent, which means that 33% of all U.S. households are renters (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007). The National Low Income Housing Coalition ([NLIHC], 2008) reports that nine million extremely low-income renters compete for only 6.2 million affordable rental homes. "Affordable" rentals are those that cost no more than 30% of renters' incomes. However, rental housing costs have skyrocketed.

Between 1999 and 2004, rental prices for primary residences increased by 19% compared to a 13% rise in the Consumer Price Index, indicating that rental prices are outpacing the rate of wage increases (NLIHC, 2008).

Despite the overwhelming need for affordable housing, federal funding for housing assistance programs has been severely cut over the last decade (CBPP, 2009). Using data from the American Community Survey, Pelletiere and Wardrip (2006) found that federal housing programs assist as few as one of five low-income households in need. Government housing assistance programs are overwhelmed and often have long waiting lists, if these lists are open to the public at all. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (2009) reports that, due to insufficient funding, only one-fourth of all eligible families receive any federal housing assistance. In California, 465,340 families were on waiting lists for public housing and rental subsidies (e.g., Section 8 rental vouchers) across 20 communities including Los Angeles, San Francisco, Oakland, and Fresno (Williams, 2000). According to the same report, the time from waiting list sign-up to being housed can take from one to eight years (Williams, 2000). In 2000, Santa Cruz County had 234 public housing units, but had 6,000 families on the waiting list (Williams, 2000). Across the U.S., the lack of safe, affordable housing is a primary contributor to individuals and families becoming homeless.

In addition to low wage work, cuts in social services, and low cost housing shortages, lack of health care also plays a major role in contributing to homelessness. Access to affordable health care is one of the most important issues facing the U.S.

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today. Approximately 15.7% of people in the United States (48.6 million) are without health insurance (CBPP, 2012). In addition, approximately 25 million adults are underinsured (i.e., health insurance that does not adequately protect people from high medical expenses), an increase of 60% from 2003 (Commonwealth Fund, 2008). Similar to the escalation of rental housing prices relative to wages, health care costs are increasing at four times the rate of wages (Center for American Progress, 2008). According to the Center for American Progress (2008), the cumulative cost of premiums increased by 91% between 2000 and 2007, when nearly a fifth of American families spent more than 10% of their disposable income on health care. Additionally, over 25% of adults reported not obtaining treatment or prescription drugs due to high cost (Center for American Progress, 2008). Without adequate health insurance and under increasing medical costs, unexpected health emergencies or serious chronic illnesses can quickly overburden the resources of poor households and put families at risk of homelessness. Collectively, structural causes of poverty and homelessness (e.g., low-wage work, lack of affordable health care) are rarely discussed in news media stories. Instead, individual risk factors (e.g., drug addiction, mental illness) are often emphasized.

 "Individual" risk factors. So-called "individual" or "personal" risk factors such as domestic violence, mental illness, and substance abuse also contribute to homelessness. Although conceptualized as "individual" risks, they are driven by underlying systematic power imbalances. Domestic violence, for instance, is frequently described as a "personal" risk factor for homelessness, but it is lack of

institutional support and access to adequate housing, evictions, discrimination, and poverty that contribute to domestic violence and ultimately, homelessness among women and children. One-third to one-half of female-headed households report domestic violence as a primary cause for homelessness (U.S. Conference of Mayors, 2007; Zorza, 1991; National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 2001). The lack of housing stability and affordable housing options increases the risks for women experiencing domestic violence. The shortage of alternative housing options (e.g., emergency shelters, transitional housing) often contributes to women remaining in or returning to violent relationships (American Civil Liberties Union [ACLU], 2008). Studies in Minnesota and North Dakota revealed that 46% and 44% of homeless women, respectively, reported that they had stayed in abusive relationships because they did not have a place to go (ACLU, 2008). Some landlords are unwilling to rent to domestic violence survivors, citing "zero tolerance for crime" policies, which exacerbate barriers to alternative housing. These policies "allow landlords to evict tenants when violence occurs in their homes, regardless of whether the tenant is the victim or the perpetrator of the violence" (ACLU, 2008, para. 4). Policies that penalize domestic violence survivors for reporting abuse likely deter women from seeking assistance. It is also the case that housing providers discriminate against women who have experienced domestic abuse. A report from a New York fair housing group found that 28% of landlords outright refused to rent to a domestic violence survivor or did not follow up as promised (Anti-Discrimination Center of

Metro New York, 2005). These housing policies penalize women and children for reporting abuse and leaving violent conditions.

Some research indicates that poor women experience higher rates of violence than women with higher household incomes. According to an ACLU study, women with household incomes of less than $7,500 are seven times more likely to experience domestic violence than their counterparts with household incomes over $75,000 (ACLU, 2008). Other research reveals that women who reside in rental housing experience domestic violence at three times the rate of women who own their homes and that women in "financially distressed relationships" living in poor neighborhoods are twice as likely to experience domestic violence compared to women in equally financially distressed relationships living in more affluent neighborhoods (ACLU, 2008). Poverty and domestic violence contribute to women's vulnerability to homelessness in that poverty severely limits women's choices and makes it more difficult to leave abusive relationships.

Domestic violence can impact many aspects of women's lives including economic stability, mental and physical well-being, and housing. An abuser's behavior can play a significant role in sabotaging women's opportunities for economic stability (Tolman & Raphael, 2000). It is common for perpetrators of domestic violence to wreak havoc on women's credit history, leaving her with no landlord references, and denying her the ability to receive her security and utility deposit. The abusive partner can interfere with or prevent education, job training, and the ability to find and keep a job. For example, the abusive partner may cause a

woman to lose a job due to injuries at home causing excessive absenteeism or decreased productivity due to harassment at work. Between one-quarter and one-half of domestic violence victims report that they have lost a job due to domestic violence (Legal Momentum, 2007).

Mental illness and substance addiction also contribute to homelessness. It is estimated that 20 to 25% of the single adult homeless population and approximately 8% of individuals in families suffer from some form of severe, persistent mental illness (U.S. Conference of Mayors, 2007; NCH, 2008b). According to a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2003) report, most homeless persons with mental illness do not need to be institutionalized and can live in communities with the appropriate supportive housing options. However, there are not enough community-based treatment services and appropriate, affordable housing to accommodate the number of people with mental disorders (NCH, 2008b). Again, the absence of affordable housing and institutional support (i.e., treatment services, appropriate supportive housing programs) contributes to homelessness. The low level of government assistance provided to disabled Americans is yet another structural factor that contributes to homelessness for people with mental illness. The maximum Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits for a qualifying individual is $698 per month (Social Security Administration, 2012), and this is often the sole source of income for recipients (NCH, 2008b). Similar to TANF and food stamp benefits, SSI benefits have not kept up with increases in inflation and housing rental costs.

Improving SSI benefit levels would help individuals afford housing and other essential expenses for daily living and lower the risk of homelessness.

While the majority of people with substance addictions do not become homeless, drug and alcohol addictions heighten the risk of homelessness. In a survey of 25 cities, substance addiction was rated as one of the top three causes for homelessness, with 26 to 37% of homeless adults suffering from substance addictions (U.S. Conference of Mayors, 2007; 2008). However, the relationship between homelessness and substance addiction is disputed. According to the National Coalition for the Homeless (2008c), "while addictive disorders appear disproportionately among the homeless population, such disorders cannot, by themselves, explain the increase in homelessness" (para. 1).

Historically, low-income individuals, particularly those with addictive disorders and/or mental illness, lived in single-room-occupancy (SRO) housing. Between 1970 and the mid-1980s, approximately one million SRO units were eliminated, much like other public housing units (Wright & Rubin, 1997). From 1975 to 1988, San Francisco eliminated 43% of its low cost residential hotels; by 1985, Los Angeles had lost more than half of its downtown SRO housing; and between 1970 and 1982, New York City had demolished, abandoned, or converted 87% of its SRO units (NCH, 2008b). The rapid decline in SRO housing forced many people with addictions into homelessness. Furthermore, in 1996, Congress eliminated SSI and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits for individuals diagnosed with addiction disorders. A study by the National Health Care for the Homeless Council

(1999) documented the impacts of SSI and SSDI eligibility changes and discovered that loss of benefits increased homelessness among poor people with addictive disorders. Findings revealed that 76% of people with substance disorders who lost their SSI or SSDI benefits lost their housing because they could no longer afford it. Alongside the decreased availability of low-income housing and elimination of government assistance, homeless people who suffer from substance addictions face numerous barriers to adequate medical treatment and recovery opportunities. Generally, homeless individuals with addictive disorders do not have health insurance, including Medicaid, and very few are able to pay for treatment or health care. Additional barriers to treatment include lack of transportation, lack of documentation, and lack of supportive services (NCH, 2008c).

The conditions of being homeless exacerbate both mental illness and substance abuse disorders. Alcohol and drugs are often used to relieve stressful and sometimes violent conditions and, in some cases, may be used as a form of self-medication for those who also suffer from mental disorders (NCH, 2008b). It is estimated that at least one-half of severely mentally ill homeless people have a co-occurring substance abuse disorder. Moreover, homeless people with mental illness and substance addictions often have other significant health problems, including diabetes, liver disease, upper respiratory infections, serious dental problems, tuberculosis, and AIDS (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2003). All these factors combined with the unavailability of low cost housing, living wage work,

and affordable health care, increase the likelihood that individuals will experience homelessness.

   Implications. Homelessness is caused by complex and interacting structural and individual factors. Whether homelessness is attributed to structural or individualistic causes has important implications for how homelessness is understood and the policy decisions that are made (e.g., increased funding for social service programs, criminalizing homelessness). Viewing homelessness as a structural problem is associated with support for policies and programs that address structural inequities (e.g., lack of safe, affordable housing), whereas individual attributions (e.g., laziness, substance use) are typically associated with policies that target individual behavior (e.g., anti-loitering ordinances). Media representations of homelessness can influence attitudes and beliefs and play a significant role in advancing different attributions for homelessness. Although the root causes of homelessness are multi-faceted and structural in nature, mainstream media outlets do not consistently reflect a structural understanding of homelessness in the U.S. Media representations may contribute to individualistic attributions for homelessness (e.g., laziness) and increased support for restrictive homeless policy by highlighting stigmatized characteristics (e.g., mental illness) and classist stereotypes (Mendelson, 1999).

Criminalization of Homelessness

   While a sizeable body of research and legal scholarship examines the criminalization of drugs (e.g., Reinarman, Cohen, & Kaal, 2004; Levine &

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Reinarman, 2005) and people with mental illness (e.g., Lamb & Weinberger, 1998; National Alliance on Mental Illness, n.d.; Munetz, Grande, & Chambers, 2001), less attention has been given to the criminalization of homelessness. As the number of people living in public spaces continues to rise, many communities have enacted policies that restrict homeless people's movements and criminalize fundamental human activities such as sleeping or camping, eating, sitting, and panhandling in public spaces. Criminal penalties are imposed for violation of these laws (Snow & Mulcahy, 2001; Wachholz, 2005; NCH, 2006).

"Anti-nuisance" legislation in the United States dates back to early English law when "travel without means" was prohibited (Hopkins & Nackerud, 1999, p. 271). These "vagrancy" and loitering ordinances were economically driven and designed to control an individual's ability to find better paying employment – a policy which benefited more affluent and powerful people. In the United States, such laws have been in existence since colonial times and over time, have evolved to punish the unemployed and others unable to be financially self-sufficient (Hopkins & Nackerud, 1999; Wachholz, 2005). By the 1960s, all but one state in the U.S. had implemented vagrancy laws. However, in the early 1970s, the U.S. Supreme Court invalidated vagrancy laws as "impermissibly vague" (Hopkins & Nackerud, 1999, p. 271). Since this time, new laws with more specific criteria (e.g., defining "illegal" behaviors such as setting up camp or sleeping outdoors) have emerged (Hopkins & Nackerud, 1999). Arguments advancing restrictive policies include promotion of

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public health and safety, assurances that public property is put to its "intended" use, and the protection of aesthetic and economic concerns.

Local ordinances and laws do not explicitly target homeless people, however, by prohibiting certain activities in public spaces, they serve to criminalize homelessness. Although more recently criminalized activities (e.g., sleeping, sitting in public spaces) are not, in themselves, "criminal" acts, they have become grounds for arrest and prosecution. In 1996, the city of Atlanta enacted controversial "quality of life" ordinances in which activities, such as camping in a public park or sleeping in one's vehicle, were deemed illegal. The consequences for violation of the "Urban Camping" ordinance are steep and carry the threat of a $1,000 fine and up to a year in jail (Hopkins & Nackerud, 1999). Attempts to enforce such ordinances include police "sweeps" of areas inhabited by people who are homeless (Foscarinis, Cunningham-Bowers, & Brown, 1999; NCH, 2006; Stoner, 1995). Often, when police or city employees perform sweeps of these areas, personal property is seized and destroyed and homeless people are forced to move elsewhere or are arrested in an effort to "clean up" the neighborhood. Ordinances prohibiting sleeping or camping in public spaces are used to justify the destruction of a person's tent and personal possessions without giving notice of the plans or a process that allows people to first claim their property (NLCHP, 2003). Homeless sweeps are often conducted at times when a city is preparing for major events (e.g., conventions, national sporting events) or during a time period when large numbers of tourists and visitors are likely to be in town (Stoner, 1995).

In recent years, cities have gone as far as implementing laws and citing

individual citizens and groups for sharing food with homeless people (NLCHP &

NCH, 2007). For example, in Dallas, Texas, "anyone caught sharing food with a

homeless person without a permit may be fined up to $2,000 and/or jailed for up to

six months" (NLCHP & NCH, 2007, p. 3). Some city officials claim that sharing

food with homeless people poses a public safety issue, while others believe that

allowing individuals or groups to share food contributes to the "dependency" of

homeless people on others for resources and detracts from a homeless person's desire

to leave the streets (NLCHP & NCH, 2007). Common stereotypes about homeless

people (e.g., unclean, lazy) serve as the basis for these allegations. Accordingly,

Michael Stoops, former Executive Director of the National Coalition for the

Homeless, believes that "restricting the feeding of homeless people in public spaces

nationwide is just another veiled effort to push the visible poor out of downtown

America" (Associated Press, 2007, para. 11). The "pushing out" of homeless people

can be seen as the result of moral exclusion whereby "individuals or groups are

perceived as outside the boundary in which moral values, rules, and considerations of

fairness apply" (Opotow, 1990, p. 1). Homeless women and men are perceived as

"expendable" and "undeserving" due to their non-normative housing status and

consequently, "harming them appears acceptable, appropriate, or just" (Opotow,

1990, p. 1). As a result, policies that criminalize homelessness (e.g., sleeping bans,

anti-panhandling ordinances) are rationalized using negative attributions about

homeless people (outgroup members) that provide justification for discrimination (Opotow, 1990).

Anti-homeless ordinances are framed as though general public concerns are being addressed (e.g., public health and safety), however, these arguments fail to acknowledge deep-rooted associations among race (e.g., stereotypes about African Americans as dangerous, lazy), poverty, and homelessness. People experiencing homelessness in previous generations were predominately older white men and it remains the case that single adult men still comprise more than half of the homeless population (U.S. Conference of Mayors, 2005), but the demographic composition of the homeless population is changing. The homeless population is increasingly African American and comprised of women with families (North & Smith, 1994). As the racial composition of the homeless population has shifted to an estimated 42% African American (U.S. Conference of Mayors, 2006), cities have also grown more punitive in addressing homelessness. Analyzing both covert and overt representations of race and homelessness in news media may provide much needed insight into the role of framing and support for anti-homeless ordinances.

Systematically examining the political climate of U.S. cities that enact restrictive policies related to homelessness is also important. In a 2009 study, Noy interviewed representatives from over 50 organizations (e.g., social service providers, businesses, neighborhood groups, government agencies) in San Francisco about their beliefs about homelessness. Individualistic attributions for homelessness, particularly those emphasizing choice, were largely endorsed by the political "right" (p. 230).

Conservative respondents directly denied structural causes of homelessness:

> I don't think [homelessness] has anything to do with housing. I don't know,
> maybe I'm not seeing the picture clearly, but I don't see that homelessness has
> much to do with housing…You know, we're dealing with the mentally ill,
> we're dealing with the addicted, we're dealing with the career panhandler.
> (Noy, 2009, p. 232)

This individual framing focuses on the limitations, deficiencies, or "deviant" choices
as the major cause of homelessness (Noy, 2009, p. 229). Moreover, conservative
respondents endorsed increasing "social control efforts, and police measures to stem
unacceptable behavior and to push homeless people off the streets and into work and
housing, as important first steps in resolving homelessness" (p. 233). Centrist and
progressive respondents did not support individualistic causal attributions or
individually focused solutions. Structural attributions for homelessness, such as the
lack of affordable housing, living wage jobs, and lack of health care were identified
as primary causes of homelessness. Long waiting lists for social services, low-
income housing, and mental health care were cited as frequent contributors to
homelessness in San Francisco (Noy, 2009). Not surprisingly, representatives from
centrist and progressive organizations also expressed opposition to increasing police
measures against homeless people and believed such actions would worsen the
situation for homeless individuals and families. Although causal explanations and
proposed solutions for homelessness varied as a function of political affiliation (e.g.,
conservative, centrist, or progressive), ultimately, Noy (2009) attributes the

enactment of restrictive policies endorsed by conservatives to political influence and financial resources, such as campaign contributions. Drawing on these findings, the current study seeks to gain a deeper understanding of the relationship of political climate, demographic characteristics (e.g., racial and socioeconomic composition), and media framing to the adoption of anti-homelessness ordinances in five cities, Los Angeles, Atlanta, Orlando, Portland, and Seattle.

Chapter Two

Theoretical Frameworks for Examining Homelessness and

Anti-Homeless Policies in U.S. Newspapers

This analysis focuses on the intersections of race, class, and media framing of people who are homeless and anti-homeless policies. The main purpose of this study is to investigate the framing of homelessness and restrictive city policies in five U.S. cities and their respective newspapers. Of particular interest is examining how the framing of homelessness and anti-homeless policies perpetuate and reinforce stereotypes of and individualistic attributions for homelessness in order to serve the interests of those with power and influence (e.g., business owners, politicians). This chapter provides an overview of the theoretical frameworks that inform the current study: stereotyping and attribution theory, media framing research, and critical race theory (CRT).

Stereotyping and Attribution Theory

To gain a fuller understanding of causal attributions for poverty and homelessness it is important to address the origins of stereotyping. From a social cognitive perspective, stereotypes are "mental representations of a group and its members" and stereotyping is "the cognitive activity treating individual elements in terms of higher level categorical properties" (Augoustinos & Walker, 1998, p. 631). As cognitive schemas, stereotypes guide the encoding and retrieval of information from memory; they simplify incoming information and categorize individuals into groups (Stangor & Lange, 1994). Stereotypes differ from other schemas because of

their consequences. Research reveals that social categorization and stereotyping contribute to the creation of behavioral expectations (Jussim, 1986), ingroup favoritism and outgroup bias (Tajfel, 1981), and foster prejudice and discrimination (Plous, 2003).

Stereotypes are not the result of individual cognitive activity alone, but are also social and collective products that function to justify and legitimize the status quo (Jost & Banaji, 1994). That is, stereotypes are prescriptive and lead people to make judgments about others based on dominant beliefs. Jost and Banaji (1994) argue that stereotypes develop through the need to protect one's own position and the status of the social group(s) one belongs to. Stereotypes are believed to accompany systems or structures that are "characterized by the separation of people into roles, classes, positions, or statuses, because such arrangements tend to be explained and perceived as justifiable by those who participate in them" (Jost & Banaji, 1994, p. 3). As such, the stereotype that "homeless people are dangerous" can be interpreted as an ideological justification for social distancing. Social distancing is "differentiating oneself socially from another person or group [and] expressing attitudes or beliefs dissimilar to another person's attitudes" (Swim, Ferguson & Hyers, 1999, p. 61). Distancing from poor and homeless people can take on the form of "exclusion, devaluation, discounting, and designation as 'other'" (Lott, 2002, p. 100). Ultimately, through stereotypes about homeless people (e.g., lazy, dangerous), "the legitimacy of the social and economic system is preserved and blame is placed instead on the group

that 'fails'" (Stangor & Jost, 1997, p. 339). In this case, people who are homeless are regarded as responsible for their own shortcomings and to blame for their situations.

Homeless people are stereotyped as dirty, lazy, drug- and alcohol-addicted, and mentally ill (Whaley & Link, 1998; Amster, 2003; Somerman, 1993; Knecht & Martinez, 2009; Sy, 2009). These beliefs are vividly reflected in responses to Guzewicz and Takooshian's (1992) survey of attitudes about homelessness, "A lot of these people who ask for money are just lazy. They just don't want to work for a living" and "I'm afraid to ride on the subway because you don't know what these people can do to you – they're crazy" (p. 73). These comments illustrate some of the negative stereotypes of homeless women and men. Other studies find that older homeless women are characterized as "bag ladies" – "crones or mentally ill hoarders who provoke discomfort by toting their possessions in public or uttering oaths or curses at unfortunate passersby" (Kisor & Kendal-Wilson, 2002, p. 357). The association of homelessness with serious mental illness contributes to a strong image of a "typical" homeless person as dirty, disheveled, confused, and unpredictable (Somerman, 1993). Homeless women and men who suffer from mental illness are often visible in public spaces (relative to homeless families or children), and their salience disproportionately influences public attitudes and homeless stereotypes (Somerman, 1993).

Stereotypes about homeless women and men are apt to be strongly endorsed in societies that emphasize meritocracy and individual accomplishment and work ethic (Kluegel & Smith, 1986). This is the case in the United States, where homeless

people challenge the deeply held belief that through hard work any obstacles can be overcome. One consequence of such beliefs is that the homeless are deemed "undeserving" of support or sympathy (McNamee & Miller, 2004). According to Gans (1995), the ideology of underservingness consists of four parts: The belief that poor people do not adhere to mainstream rules or uphold "good" values; they are lazy and lack motivation to work; they are promiscuous and sexually irresponsible; and if the undeserving poor refuse to change their values and practices willingly that punishments, such as ending public assistance benefits, will address their "dependency" (pp. 6-7). In a meritocratic society where everyone presumably has equal opportunities to succeed, people experiencing homeless are often perceived as failing to do so through lack of individual merit (McNamee & Miller, 2004). These beliefs help to justify restrictive policies that limit homeless people's use of public space and the discrimination and dehumanization of homeless women and men.

Racist stereotypes also influence public attitudes about homelessness. Whaley and Link's (1998) study of stereotypes associated with African Americans in relation to homelessness illustrates the intersections of racist and classist stereotypes. They found that white respondents who perceived African Americans as highly representative of the homeless population were more likely to regard homeless people as dangerous (Whaley & Link, 1998, p. 200). These perceptions coupled with stereotypes about homeless people as dirty, lazy, substance-addicted and mentally ill deepen negative attitudes toward homeless people and support for restrictive policies. This is particularly important given that people of Color are overrepresented among

the homeless. The homeless population is estimated to be 42% African American, 39% white, 13% Hispanic, 4% Native American, and 2% Asian (U.S. Conference of Mayors, 2006). African Americans in particular are overrepresented in the homeless populations of many urban areas (Whaley & Link, 1998; First, Roth, & Arewa, 1988), fueling the intersection of racist and classist stereotypes.

Stereotypes about unhoused people are embedded in causal attributions for homelessness. Three primary types of attributions for poverty and homelessness are identified in the psychological literature: individualistic, structural, and fatalistic (Feagin, 1975; Furnham, 1982; Lee, Jones, & Lewis, 1990). Individualistic attributions place the responsibility on individuals for creating their own homelessness and focuses on "deficient" personal characteristics, such as drug or alcohol abuse and laziness (Furnham, 1982). Structural attributions emphasize economic and structural conditions such as low wage work and discrimination as responsible for homelessness (Furnham, 1982). Fatalistic attributions focus on bad luck, illness, or unfortunate circumstances (Furnham, 1982).

Research examining attributions for homelessness indicates that structural causes such as lack of jobs or affordable housing tend to receive the strongest support (Lee et al., 1990; Lee, Lewis, & Jones, 1992; Toro & McDonell, 1992). Women, younger people, and political liberals are more likely to attribute homelessness to structural and economic factors and are generally more sympathetic toward the homeless than men, older people, and political conservatives (Tompsett et al., 2006; Toro & McDonell, 1992). However, attributions for homelessness are complicated

and seemingly contradictory ideas about the causes of homelessness may be present simultaneously. Lee et al. (1990) found that almost 32% of respondents endorsed at least one individualistic and one structural cause for homelessness. This finding reflects the complex and multifaceted nature of beliefs about the homeless. It is also the case that perceived causes of homelessness may differ depending on the group being considered (e.g., children, families, single adults). Attributions for homelessness may also vary as a function of broader economic conditions, with structural factors being endorsed less during a time of economic growth (Tompsett et al., 2006).

Two individual focused attributions for homelessness – mental illness and drug or alcohol abuse – are strongly endorsed. Compared to data from 1993-1994, respondents in 2001 endorsed stronger support for the belief that homeless people are personally "flawed" and estimated that a higher percentage of homeless people are mentally ill (29% in 1993-1994 compared to 37% in 2001) or impaired (17% in 1993-1994, 20% in 2001;Tompsett et al., 2006). In a 2007 Gallup poll, 67% of respondents cited mental illness as a major factor contributing to homelessness (Fannie Mae, 2007). Furthermore, respondents in Link et al.'s (1995) study believed that 55 out of 100 homeless adults are addicted to drugs or alcohol and 26% of respondents believed that at least three-fourths of homeless people are addicted to drugs or alcohol. Even higher numbers were identified in a 2007 Gallup poll, with 85% of the general public listing drug and alcohol abuse as a major factor contributing to homelessness (Fannie Mae, 2007). Although substance abuse and mental illness are

among the top three causes of homelessness, this is only the case for single homeless adults and does not apply to homeless families who make up approximately 30% of the homeless population (U.S. Conference of Mayors, 2005). Among homeless families, cities identify lack of affordable housing, poverty, and unemployment as the top three causes for family homelessness (U.S. Conference of Mayors, 2008). Nevertheless, the public tends to overestimate the contribution of mental illness and substance addiction to homelessness. This misperception reduces complex structural problems to individual attributions of criminal behavior and drugs.

Laziness is also regarded as an important cause of homelessness. When assessing perceived causes of homelessness, Gallup poll respondents are asked to select from a variety of possible causes (e.g., poor education, domestic violence, home foreclosure). Gallup's list does not include individual attributes such as laziness, yet 3% of respondents identified laziness as the primary cause of homelessness. In another study, when asked, "How much does laziness on the part of the homeless themselves contribute to homelessness?" 29% indicated "a lot" and an additional 35% responded "some" (Link et al., 1995, p. 546). The homeless were also perceived as people that "make neighborhoods worse, spoil parks for families and children, hurt local business by their presence, and threaten the quality of life" in cities around the nation (Link et al., 1995, p. 546).

Stereotypes about the homeless and attributions for homelessness influence policy attitudes. A large body of research examines the relationship of attitudes and beliefs to policy attitudes (e.g., Maurer, Park, & Judd, 1996; David, 2009; Pratto,

Stallworth, & Conway-Lanz, 1998). In Maurer et al.'s (1996) study of two

stereotyped groups (i.e., gays and welfare recipients) and policy attitudes, the strength

of stereotypical beliefs about each group predicted support for relevant policies. In

this case, for both gays and welfare recipients, and across all six policies examined in

the study, the stereotypicality measures reliably predicted policy judgments. If a

majority of the public holds negative attitudes against minority and/or marginalized

groups and those attitudes affect support for policies in line with prejudicial opinions,

then a government that follows public opinion may institutionalize discriminatory

practices (David, 2009). Negative beliefs about homelessness undoubtedly have

implications for how members of society view homelessness, how decisions are made

in regard to homeless policy (e.g., social service programs, criminalization of

homelessness), and further, how service providers, law officials, and community

members treat homeless people.

Media Research

Previous research documents that negative stereotypes about homelessness are

common in mainstream media representations (e.g., Kendall, 2005; Min, 1999; Lind

& Danowski, 1999). Mass media is undoubtedly one of the most influential social

and cultural forces in contemporary western society, and media depictions of

homeless people are likely to both reflect and reinforce stereotypes and individualistic

attributions for homelessness. It is estimated that U.S. residents watch an average of

three hours of television each day and spend undetermined hours reading newspapers

and magazines, listening to the radio, and watching movies (Kendall, 2005; Mantsios,

2003). While control of other social and cultural institutions is diversified, the mass

media is owned by a limited number of corporations. In the 1980s, an estimated 50

corporations controlled and owned the major media outlets, however by 2004,

ownership had dwindled to just five major corporations: Time Warner, Disney,

Murdoch's News Corporation, Bertelsmann of Germany, and Viacom (Media Reform

Information Center, 2008). This means that the majority of people in the U.S. learn

about national and international news and events through media sources that are

operated by a small group of elites.

The news media affects attitudes toward a broad range of social and political

issues (e.g., homelessness, violence, health care, civil rights, and elections; see Bryant

& Oliver, 2009; McCombs & Reynolds, 2009). Iyengar and Kinder (1987) argue that

news media is particularly influential because of its potential to shape public opinion

toward issues that have not been directly experienced (Kinder, 1998). One way news

media influence public opinion is through the agenda-setting effect, whereby

problems that are prominently displayed on the national news become the problems

the viewing public regards as the nation's most important (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987).

In a series of laboratory experiments, Iyengar and Kinder (1987) demonstrated that

the salience of a particular issue (e.g., defense preparedness, pollution,

unemployment) in television news programs influenced the perceived importance of

various social issues. Further studies have documented similar effects regarding the

salience of racism, drugs, crime, and the economy in news reports supporting the

agenda-setting hypothesis (Wang, 2000; Reese & Danielian, 1989; Ghanem, 1996;

Hester & Gibson, 2003). Buck, Toro, and Ramos (2004) found that after a significant

increase in media coverage of homelessness during the 1980s, coverage steadily

declined during the late 1980s and early 1990s and eventually leveled off in the mid-

1990s. The lack of emphasis on homelessness in media contributes to the perception

that homelessness is not a serious issue and just as the media influences public

attitudes about the importance of pollution and crime, the priority assigned to

homelessness may also be affected.

Newspapers have also developed the practice of editorial agenda setting to

provide an alternative perspective on community and social issues—one that places

less emphasis on journalistic objectivity. Through agenda setting, news organizations

not only increase the salience of certain topics through the number of stories

published, but newspaper editorials also advance specific solutions (Mutz & Soss,

1997). Mutz and Soss (1997) argue that while the newspaper editorial staff

determines the agenda selection, its impact is not necessarily limited to the content of

the editorial pages:

> Systematic efforts are made to increase both editorial and news coverage of
>
> the selected issues throughout the year. Rather than simply responding to an
>
> ongoing stream of events, journalists are encouraged to initiate stories in the
>
> news sections of the paper, while specific policy positions are advocated on
>
> the editorial pages. (Mutz & Soss, 1997, p. 433)

Thus, editorials influence public perceptions by communicating issue importance and

advancing solutions through policy recommendations made by the editorial staff.

Media framing. Framing plays a major role in shaping how social issues are viewed. Entman (1995) defines framing as "selecting and highlighting some elements of reality and suppressing others, in a way that constructs a story about a social problem, its causes, its moral nature and its possible remedies" (p. 142). This process includes when a story is presented, how much exposure the story is given, and whether the tone is positive or negative (Kendall, 2005).

A large body of social science research documents the impact of media framing on public opinion (e.g., Kendall, 2005; Bullock, Wyche, & Williams, 2001; Entman, 1995; Gilens, 1996; Iyengar, 1990, 1991; Jones, 2002; Nelson, Clawson, & Oxley, 1997). Perhaps most striking is the differential effects of structural versus individualistic frames on public attitudes and attributions. In the United States, poverty and homelessness tend to be depicted in the media as an individual rather than a structural problem. When media frames predominately focus on personal characteristics and behaviors, responsibility for poverty is likely placed on poor people themselves and structural causes (e.g., discrimination, low wage work) are not endorsed. Iyengar (1990) found that participants who viewed episodic stories, in which the focus was on a specific event or case study (e.g., unemployed worker), were more likely to attribute poverty to individual factors (e.g., lack of motivation) while respondents who viewed thematic stories, in which political issues and events were contextualized (e.g., laid off worker), tended to make structural attributions (e.g., job market, economy) for poverty. That is, "by changing a story frame from thematic to episodic, the viewer's attribution for responsibility changes" (Mendelson,

1999, p. 177). Episodic depictions of homelessness elicited the most individual causal and treatment attributions, whereas depictions of an unemployed worker did not elicit any significant causal or treatment attributions (Iyengar, 1991, p. 54). Iyengar (1990) concluded that news broadcast framing shapes how the public perceives the causes of and the solutions to political problems, including poverty and homelessness. These findings illustrate the potential of news stories to create and reinforce stereotypes about homeless people and for the public to conclude that homelessness is not a social responsibility.

It is also important to highlight the intersections of race, class, and media framing and how racial stereotypes influence attributions for poverty and homelessness. In the same study, which examined attributions for poverty when episodic or thematic media frames were presented to participants, Iyengar (1990) found that when poor people in the news story were identified as white, societal responsibility for poverty was endorsed. Conversely, when poor people were identified as Black, poverty was more often attributed to individual responsibility. Notably, the news story that included a specific "combination of race, gender, age and marital status (e.g., Black adult single mothers) was particularly evocative of individual responsibility" (Iyengar, 1990, p. 35). This suggests that individualistic attributions for poverty may not only be influenced by dominant societal values (e.g., individualism), but also news stories about poverty that are dominated by images of poor people of Color.

Media play a significant role in the perpetuation of negative stereotypes about homelessness. Mainstream news stories about homeless people often focus on negative attributes of the homeless (e.g., irresponsible, dishonest, criminal). This negative-image framing by the media often associates homelessness with "deviancy" (Kendall, 2005). According to Min (1999), homeless women and men are frequently framed as social "deviants" (e.g., drunk, stoned, crazy, sick) and the media does not "describe their conditions in their own discourses to provide a more accurate and balanced depiction" (p. ix). These findings are reinforced by Lind and Danowski's (1999) analysis of approximately 35,000 hours of television and radio content aired between 1993 and 1996 on ABC, CNN, PBS, and NPR. Relatively little programmatic content related to homelessness was found, with only 3,134 total appearances of the word "homeless" within the 130 million word sample. Discussions of homelessness frequently included stigmatizing descriptors such as "begging," "scruffy," "erratic," and "soiled." Descriptions of homeless people included references to "derelicts," "crazy," "drugs," and "disease" in nearly 46% of programs analyzed. Empathetic or compassionate reporting occurred in only 17% of the 3,134 total references to homelessness. The researchers conclude that negative descriptions of homeless people are "not countered by an alternative image encouraging sympathy and support" (Lind & Danowski, 1999, p. 118). These findings are consistent with other media examinations of the homeless as lazy, drug-addicted, or as criminals (e.g., Hodgetts, Hodgetts, & Radley, 2006). Collectively, these depictions advance stereotypes of "danger, disorder, disease, and criminality,

and help to construct 'the other' as inferior, inhuman, unsympathetic" and as responsible for their situation (Amster, 2003, p. 195; Min, 1999).

Negative stereotypes about homeless people are common in other venues as well. A campaign by the Hotel Council of San Francisco provides a notable example of a local policy that both reflected and reinforced classist stereotypes and discrimination against homeless people. In 2003, the Hotel Council of San Francisco spent $65,000 on a billboard campaign to discourage the public from giving "handouts" to panhandlers. The billboards connected panhandling to drug abuse and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases. One billboard read, "Today we rode a cable car, visited Alcatraz, and supported a drug habit. Giving to panhandlers doesn't help, it hurts" (Matier & Ross, 2003). Another billboard showed a picture of a hand holding a cup that read "Desperate for Help," with "help" crossed out and replaced by "crack" (Matier & Ross, 2003). The billboard messages reinforce stereotypes about addiction and drug use among panhandlers, who are presumably homeless.

"Entertainment" programming provides some of the most extreme examples. The Opie and Anthony Radio Show's annual "Homeless Shopping Spree," once a nationally broadcast radio show (now airing on XM Satellite radio), devotes programming every year to cruelly mock homeless people as they participate in a "shopping spree." The radio program, broadcast since 1999, provides homeless men with free alcohol and money and encourages them to shop at high-end retail stores. The show's disc jockeys provide a running commentary of the day's events, often referring to the participants with inhumane and degrading nicknames. Radio show

listeners are asked to call into the show to join the mocking and humiliation; they are also asked to make donations to fund the day's events. By dehumanizing homeless people and using them for entertainment, this program and others like it perpetuate classist stereotypes and social distancing. In particular, the program promotes disparaging characterizations of homeless men, reinforces stereotypes about substance abuse, creates a context for confirming "deviance" (e.g., paying homeless men to try on high fashion clothes, soiling furniture while intoxicated) and exploits them for entertainment.

Media depictions of social issues play a significant role in shaping public perceptions and influencing policy decisions (Iyengar, 1990). The same is likely true of homelessness. By highlighting stigmatized characteristics and racist and classist stereotypes, media representations may significantly contribute to internal attributions for homelessness (e.g., laziness) and increased support for restrictive homeless policy (Mendelson, 1999).

Critical Race Theory

This study is also informed by critical race theory (CRT) to deconstruct U.S. newspaper coverage regarding homelessness (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Critical race theory originates from legal scholarship, but the perspective is utilized across disciplines, including anthropology, sociology, women's studies, and psychology. One of the main tenets of CRT is that racism is "normal, not aberrant, in American society" (Delgado, 1995, p. xiv) and thus, it is seen as both "normal and natural" in U.S. society (Ladson-Billings, 1998, p. 11). CRT also posits that there is little

incentive to eliminate racism because it serves an important role in maintaining and advancing the interests of those in power (i.e., white elites). Critical race theorists contend that race is socially constructed and its meaning evolves to meet the needs of the dominant group. Delgado (1989) argues that elites justify their power with stories and explanations that "construct reality in ways that maintain their privilege. Thus, oppression is rationalized, causing little self-examination by the oppressor" (as cited in Ladson-Billings, 1998, p. 14). Further, CRT emphasizes both an intersectional and anti-essentialist perspective. Intersectionality recognizes that people hold overlapping and sometimes conflicting identities (e.g., race, class, gender, sexual orientation), and anti-essentialism criticizes the notion that there is a solitary individual or group experience that can be described independently from other identities (e.g., that there is a universal female experience), and promotes the idea that there is no one single way to examine or address social issues. In terms of policy, this means that they should be evaluated based on the multiple social identities and experiences (e.g., social location broadly based on race, ethnicity, economic status, gender) to determine how the government can address people's needs. Lastly, critical race theorists argue that due to different histories and experiences of oppression, people of Color are uniquely positioned to articulate the complexities of race and racism in U.S. society (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

Critical race theory reveals that how categories and subgroups are framed "determines who has power, voice and representation and who does not" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 55). For example, Amster (2003) asserts that the association of

homeless people with the notion of "disease" originates from the dominant culture

and is then projected onto marginalized populations such as the homeless. In this

regard, a CRT perspective is particularly useful for examining homelessness and anti-

homeless policies. Doing so contributes to a broader understanding of how particular

constructions of homeless people and anti-homeless legislation, such as restrictions

on sharing food with homeless people, function to perpetuate stereotypes, maintain

stigmatization, and serve the interests of those with power and privilege.

Furthermore, while anti-homeless measures are often touted as being "race-neutral"

and widely applicable, the overrepresentation of people of Color among the homeless

population, particularly African Americans, results in differential impact and

treatment. For instance, ordinances which prohibit sleeping outdoors between dusk

and dawn or laws that limit the length of time an individual can sit on a 'public' park

bench, differentially impacts housed versus unhoused people. It can be argued that

these laws are passed under the guise of universal applicability, whereby the rich and

the poor are subject to equal treatment should they 'choose' to sleep under a bridge.

Examining the social construction of homelessness, anti-homeless policies, and how

race is depicted in mainstream news is one way to address and expose classism and

racism through a critical race standpoint.

The present research is informed by stereotype research, attribution theory,

and critical race theory to examine media framing of restrictive policies associated

with homelessness. The main research questions of the study focus on how people

who are homeless and homelessness are framed in news media, how stereotypes and

causal attributions for homelessness are related to a city's socioeconomic and

demographic composition, and how stereotypes and attributions for homelessness

inform the construction of arguments for and against restrictive ordinances.

Chapter Three

Overview of the Current Study and Methodology

Purpose of the Current Study

In the face of rising rates of homelessness, cities across the U.S. are adopting restrictive laws that target and penalize unhoused people. To gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between stereotyping, attributions for homelessness, and restrictive homeless policies, this content analysis draws upon the theoretical frameworks of attribution theory (e.g., Feagin, 1975; Kluegel & Smith, 1986; Bullock, 1999), media framing research (e.g., Iyengar, 1990; Entman, 1995, Gans, 1995; Gilens, 1996; Bullock, Wyche, & Williams, 2001; Kendall, 2005), and critical race theory (e.g., Crenshaw, 1988; Hurtado, 1996; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Limbert & Bullock, 2005). The overarching goals of this analysis were twofold: (1) to deconstruct the framing of people who are homeless and homelessness in mainstream U.S. newspapers; and (2) to offer a social psychological analysis of relationships among stereotypes, attributions for homelessness, and the criminalization of homelessness. Three primary research questions were investigated:

(1) How are people who are homeless and homelessness framed in news media?

(2) How are classist, racist, and sexist stereotypes and causal attributions for homelessness related to a city's socioeconomic and demographic composition?; and

(3) How do stereotypes and attributions for homelessness inform the construction of arguments for and against restrictive ordinances?

Three U.S. cities, Los Angeles, California, Atlanta, Georgia, and Orlando, Florida were selected for analysis based on their size, geographic, racial, and ethnic diversity, and their identification as one of the top "ten meanest cities" for homelessness in the report, *Homes not Handcuffs: The Criminalization of Homelessness in U.S. Cities* (NLCHP & NCH, 2009). These cities differ in terms of density (e.g., urban, suburban), size (e.g., large, mid-size), geographic location (e.g., West, South), and racial and ethnic composition (e.g., large proportion of ethnic minorities or predominately white). All three cities have enacted restrictive homeless ordinances including increased policing of a .85 square mile area and heavy ticketing for misdemeanor offenses (e.g., jaywalking), a ban on sharing food with more than 25 people (without a permit) more than twice a year, and restricting panhandling. In addition, two U.S. cities in the Pacific Northwest, Portland, Oregon and Seattle, Washington, were selected as "contrast" cities to the three restrictive cities. Although Portland and Seattle have also enacted tough anti-homeless ordinances, these cities have also implemented distinctive short- and long-term strategies to address homelessness. Examining similarities and differences between the cities provides insight into how cities' socioeconomic and demographic compositions are related to causal attributions for homelessness and restrictive homeless ordinances.

Procedure

　　City Selection.　Three cities, Los Angeles, Atlanta, and Orlando, were chosen for analysis based on their ranking as three of the top "ten meanest cities" for homeless people in the report, *Homes not Handcuffs: The Criminalization of Homelessness in U.S. Cities* (NLCHP & NCH, 2009).　This list was constructed using one or more of the following criteria:

> The number of anti-homeless laws in the city, the enforcement of those laws and severity of penalties, the general political climate toward homeless people in the city, local advocate support for the meanest designation, the city's history of criminalization measures, and the existence of pending or recently enacted criminalization legislation in the city. (NLCHP & NCH, 2009, p. 33)

In addition to their inclusion on NLCHP and NCH's (2009) list of "mean" cities, these cities were selected based on their diversity of size, geographical, racial, and ethnic composition.

　　Two cities, Portland and Seattle, were chosen as contrasts to Los Angeles, Atlanta, and Orlando.　Although these cities have also enacted restrictive homeless policies, they have implemented distinctive short- and long-term strategies to combat homelessness.　In-depth discussions of these strategies, along with all five cities' anti-homeless measures, are provided in Chapter 4.

　　Materials.　A total of 402 newspaper articles representing each city were analyzed.　The news sources consisted of the *Los Angeles Times* (Los Angeles, California), *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* (Atlanta, Georgia), *Orlando Sentinel*

(Orlando, Florida), *Portland Oregonian* (Portland, Oregon), and *Seattle Times* (Seattle, Washington).

The keywords "homeless" and "policy or ordinance" were used to locate articles published in the *Los Angeles Times*, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, *Orlando Sentinel,* and *Seattle Times* between January 1, 2005 and December 31, 2008, and in the *Portland Oregonian* between January 1, 2006 and December 31, 2009, approximately one year before and one year after each of these cities passed or made major revisions to restrictive homeless policies (e.g., sleeping bans). Articles from the *Los Angeles Times* were obtained through the ProQuest online database and articles from *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, *Orlando Sentinel, Portland Oregonian,* and *Seattle Times* were accessed through the NewsBank online database. Using the keywords "homeless" and "policy or ordinance," the search yielded a total of 1,113 news articles from the five newspapers. Of these, 402 articles were suitable for analysis (*Los Angeles Times* = 153; *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* = 54; *Orlando Sentinel* = 80, *Portland Oregonian* = 56; *Seattle Times* = 59).

Editorials and op-eds (opposite the editorial page) were incorporated into this content analysis to provide an additional perspective from which the public learns about social problems. Editorials are opinion pieces written by the newspaper editorial staff and often include recommendations. Op-eds are generally written by named authors who are not affiliated with the publication. For the purpose of this study, editorials and op-eds were coded and analyzed together due to the limited number of articles. A search with the keyword "homeless" was conducted for

editorials and op-eds through the ProQuest and NewsBank databases (within the same time frames listed earlier) for all five newspapers. The search yielded a total of 589 editorials, with 184 editorials suitable for analysis (*Los Angeles Times* = 48; *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* = 22; *Orlando Sentinel* = 55; *Portland Oregonian* = 35; *Seattle Times* = 24). Letters to the editor and articles not explicitly focusing on homelessness were excluded from the analysis.

News Article Content Coding

All newspaper articles were coded along the following categories (see Appendix A to review the complete coding framework):

General information. Articles were coded for level of analysis (e.g., local/county, statewide, national), and focus (e.g., homelessness or other poverty related issue).

Description of key actors. Consistent with previous research findings (e.g., Gilens, 1996; Clawson & Trice, 2000; Lind & Danowksi, 1999), the frequency with which poor and homeless people were featured and how they were described were analyzed. Actors in each article were coded in terms of housing status (e.g., homeless or non-homeless people), social location (e.g., homeless person, community member, government official), presence of classist, racist, and sexist stereotyping, and other descriptors (e.g., facing hardship, overcoming adversity).

Particular attention was paid to the presence of positive (e.g., resilient, determined, hopeful) and negative (e.g., violent, criminal) descriptors of homeless people, including stereotypes frequently associated with homeless people (e.g., lazy,

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deviant). Subgroups of the homeless were categorized in terms of perceived "deservingness" (e.g., elderly, veterans, children as "deserving;" people with substance addictions as "undeserving").

News Framing.

Episodic versus thematic framing. Drawing on Iyengar's (1990) construction of episodic and thematic framing, the number of episodic and thematic news stories was calculated. News stories were coded as episodic if the article primarily focused on an individual's or family's experience of homelessness or a specific event (e.g., opening of homeless shelter), whereas news stories that discussed broader trends, (e.g., increasing homelessness, public policy) were coded as thematic.

Causal attributions. Based on previous research on attributions for poverty and homelessness (see Bullock, 1999; Cozzarelli, et al., 2001; Lee, Jones & Lewis, 1990), coding for causal attributions for the "problem" (i.e., homelessness) was conducted. Articles were analyzed to determine if homelessness was attributed to primarily structural causes (e.g., lack of affordable housing, unavailability of living wage work) or individual causes (e.g., criminal behavior, substance abuse, lack of interest in self/economic improvement), and for relationships among the types of causal attributions discussed and responsibility and/or blame assigned for homelessness.

Editorial Content Coding

The coding categories for editorials were constructed based on the classifications developed for the news article coding. As such, several of the coding

categories for the editorials overlap with those of the news articles and in some cases contain identical questions for comparison purposes. All editorials were coded along the following categories (see Appendix B to review the complete coding framework):

General information. The coding questions for this section were identical to that of the news article coding. Editorials were coded for level of analysis (e.g., local/county, statewide, national), and focus (e.g., homelessness or other poverty related issue).

Description of key actors. Similar to the news article coding, the editorials were examined for the inclusion of homeless and housed people in the article, and if homeless people were described positively and/or negatively within the editorial.

Editorial framing.

Episodic versus thematic framing. The coding questions for this section were identical to that of the news article coding. The frequency of episodic and thematic editorials was calculated. Editorials were coded as episodic if the story primarily focused on an individual's or family's experience of homelessness or a specific event and editorials that discussed broader trends, (e.g., increasing homelessness, public policy) were coded as thematic.

Causal attributions. Editorials were analyzed to determine if homelessness was attributed to primarily structural causes (e.g., lack of affordable housing, unavailability of living wage work) or individual causes (e.g., criminal behavior, substance abuse, lack of interest in self/economic improvement), and for

relationships among the types of causal attributions discussed and responsibility

and/or blame assigned for homelessness.

Coding Procedure

Seven trained undergraduate research assistants (RAs) assisted with article

coding. Research assistants received extensive training from the primary investigator

and completed a minimum of two rounds of practice coding before coding

independently. In the first phase of practice coding, all RAs and the primary

investigator coded the same 15 newspaper articles. The primary investigator

compiled all coding results and determined inter-coder reliability. After meeting with

all RAs to discuss initial concerns and answer questions, a second round of practice

coding occurred. Again, all seven RAs and the primary investigator coded the same

10 newspaper articles. Once inter-coder reliability was calculated, a second meeting

to address remaining questions was conducted. The practice coding continued with

some research assistants until percentage agreement reached a satisfactory level (80%

or higher) and independent coding by the RAs began. The same training procedure

was employed for coding of all editorials with three RAs who were previously trained

and coded a portion of the news articles.

All articles were read by the primary investigator and coded independently by

at least two readers to ensure inter-coder reliability. The overall percentage

agreement for the 402 news articles was 84%; the overall percentage agreement for

the 184 editorials and op-eds was 85%. When coding disagreements occurred, the

primary investigator resolved discrepancies. After preliminary coding was

completed, frequencies were calculated and broader themes characterizing the news

stories and editorials were identified.

Chapter Four

City and Policy Profiles

Five U.S. cities and their respective newspapers were selected for inclusion in the present study. This chapter summarizes the racial and ethnic composition, political affiliation (e.g., voting trends, elected officials), poverty and homelessness rates (when available), and anti-homeless ordinances in each of the cities analyzed. For a comparison of the cities' demographics and restrictive ordinances, please refer to Tables 1, 2, and 3.

Los Angeles, California. Los Angeles has the dubious distinction of being identified as the "meanest" city to homeless people in 2009 (NLCHP & NCH). According to the report, *Homes Not Handcuffs: The Criminalization of Homelessness in U.S. Cities* (NLCHP & NCH, 2009), the "mean" city list is constructed using one or more of the following criteria:

> the number of anti-homeless laws in the city, the enforcement of those laws
> and severity of penalties, the general political climate toward homeless people
> in the city, local advocate support for the meanest designation, the city's
> history of criminalization measures, and the existence of pending or recently
> enacted criminalization legislation in the city. (NLCHP & NCH, 2009, p. 33)

Located on the west coast, Los Angeles is the second largest city in the United States with a population of 3.8 million people (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). Of Los Angeles residents who identify with one race, approximately 50% are white (29.3% non-Hispanic white), 9.8% Black or African American, 10.7% Asian, 0.5% American

Indian and Alaska Native, and 0.2% Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander. Nearly 3% of individuals identified with two or more races and 48.5% of the total population were of Hispanic or Latino origin of any race (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009).

In terms of political affiliation, Los Angeles County has voted for the Democratic presidential candidate for most of the past four decades and the current mayor of Los Angeles, Antonio Villaraigosa (2005-present), is a Democrat. Poverty rates in the city of Los Angeles are higher than the national rate with 15.8% of families and 19.1% of individuals living below the official poverty thresholds, compared to 11.1% of families and 14.3% of individuals nationally (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009; 2010). According to the *2008 Report Card on Homelessness in Los Angeles* (Wolsh, et al., 2009), "the number of homeless people in Los Angeles is higher than in any other U.S. urban area," making Los Angeles a particularly important city to examine (p. 3). Approximately 43,000 people are homeless on any given night in the county of Los Angeles (as defined by the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, [LAHSA], 2009), with 24,915 homeless people in the city of Los Angeles (LAHSA, 2009). In Los Angeles, 37% of homeless people were sheltered while 63% were unsheltered (LAHSA, 2009). The highest concentration of homeless individuals in Los Angeles is in Skid Row, also known as Central City East, a 52 city block area of downtown. In 2009, 3,802 homeless individuals lived on Skid Row (LAHSA, 2009).

One of the major Los Angeles initiatives examined in this study is the Safer City Initiative (SCI), which designates Skid Row as one of five target areas in the

city. The SCI, passed in September 2006, is particularly noteworthy because it included the creation of the SCI Task Force, adding 50 police officers to the .85 square miles of Skid Row at the cost of $6 million annually – about the same amount the city spends on homeless services for the entire city each year (Blasi, 2007). Ultimately, the city claimed its goal was to reduce crime in the Skid Row area (Blasi, 2007). The initiative included mandates for "fixing up the area," such as adding streetlights, cameras, and trimming the trees. In addition, the "Streets or Services" program was created to provide an option for those facing arrest for sleeping on the sidewalk, a misdemeanor crime in Los Angeles, to enroll in rehabilitation programs.

Blasi's (2007) investigation into the origins of SCI uncovered that the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) created a strategic document called "Homeless Reduction Strategies" in 2002. This included a proposal to work with the City Council offices, the Business Improvement Districts, and the City Attorney to "impact the problem of the criminal homeless" (Blasi, 2007, p. 24). From this point forward, aggressive measures were taken by the LAPD to "clean up" Skid Row, including massive sweeps of the area. In February 2003, Chief William Bratton announced the implementation of a "broken windows" policing strategy for dealing with three areas of Los Angeles, including Skid Row (Blasi, 2007). According to Blasi (2007), "The theory postulates that serious crime is spawned by the perceived or actual tolerance of minor crime and 'quality of life' offenses" (p. 25). Interestingly, future meeting notes about the crackdown on Skid Row revealed that there was:

no discussion of lawlessness [what was claimed as the problem] other than violations that inevitably accompany homelessness in the absence of adequate shelter or other facilities: sleeping or sitting on the sidewalk, conducting biological functions in locations other than bathrooms. Rather, the focus was entirely on discouraging visible homelessness in Skid Row. (Blasi, 2007, p. 26)

Critics of SCI claim that the initiative not only targets criminals – it also criminalizes homelessness (Jaffe, 2009). In the first year of SCI, the Los Angeles Police Department wrote approximately 12,000 citations, primarily for pedestrian violations (e.g., walking on "don't walk" signal, jaywalking) – a rate that is between 48 and 69 times the rate at which similar citations are issued citywide. Blasi (2007) notes that the issuing of "thousands of citations [are] destined to lead to arrest warrants…[and] the City risks confirming the suspicion that the real aim…is to make the area sufficiently risky and unpleasant for poor and homeless people [so] that they will leave the area" (p. 36). Consequently, the enforcement of initiatives that criminalize homeless women and men function to create additional barriers to much needed services.

Atlanta, Georgia. Atlanta was ranked fourth on the "top ten meanest cities" to homeless people list in 2009 (NLCHP & NCH). According to the Census Bureau's American Community Survey data (2009), Atlanta has a population of 515,843. Atlanta residents identify as 43.1% white (40.8% non-Hispanic white), 50.1% Black or African American, 2.7% Asian, and 0.2% American Indian and Alaska Native.

Approximately 1.2% of the population identifies with two or more races and 5.3% report being of Hispanic or Latino origin of any race (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). Atlanta is unique in that approximately 90% of the city is in Fulton County and the remaining 10% of the city is in DeKalb County, Georgia. Based on election results from both counties, the majority of voters voted for Democrats in the 2004 and 2008 presidential elections. Both Shirley Franklin, who served as mayor of Atlanta from 2002 to 2010, and the current mayor, Kasim Reed (2010 to present) are Democrats.

Nearly 18% of Atlanta families and a staggering 21.4% of individuals live below poverty thresholds; rates of homelessness are also high. According to the *2009 Metro Atlanta Tri-Jurisdictional Collaborative Homeless Census* report, 6,131 people were identified as homeless during a point-in-time count in the city of Atlanta. The city's homeless population is comprised of 87% homeless individuals and 13% homeless families. Between 2003 and 2009, the number of homeless people increased by 20% (1,214 people) and the emergency shelter and transitional housing occupancy number increased by 31% (1,306 people) during that same time period.

Starting in 1996, the City Council passed a series of "quality of life" ordinances, including the Urban Camping and Improper Use of Public Places ordinances, which prohibit lying down, sleeping, meal preparation, and storing belongings on public property (Hopkins & Nackerud, 1999). The passage of these ordinances coincided with the city's hosting of the 1996 Olympic Games. In 2005, Atlanta enacted a panhandling ban within the downtown "tourist triangle" prior to the opening of the Georgia Aquarium, the world's largest aquarium. This law also bans

panhandling in other locations including soliciting within 15 feet of an ATM, parking lot pay box, bus stop, taxi stand, or pay telephone. All panhandling after dark is prohibited. Penalties for violation of the ordinance include up to 30 days imprisonment and a $1,000 fine for a third offense. Around the same time the panhandling ordinance was passed, the city also created a new homeless services center. The Gateway Center, located in the remodeled city jail, offers emergency shelter to 300 men, women, and children and houses more than 25 agencies that provide services including cash assistance and treatment for substance abuse and mental illness. The intention was to have Atlanta police officers and social workers refer violators of the panhandling ordinance to the center for services. Repeat violators are tried in court and urged to seek treatment through the Gateway Center as an "option" instead of paying fines and serving jail time. While Gateway Center has assisted thousands of homeless individuals and families since its opening, critics have voiced concern regarding the city's failure to create an integrated plan with social services and law enforcement and a system for violation-accounting (Torpy, 2010). The panhandling ordinance, along with other quality of life laws passed in Atlanta, was a central focus for this analysis.

Orlando, Florida. The city of Orlando, located in central Florida, was ranked the third "meanest" city to homeless people in the United States (NLCHP & NCH, 2009). Orlando has a population of 227,961, with 58.2% of residents identifying as white (45% non-Hispanic white), 27.5% Black or African American, 3% Asian, 0.4% American Indian and Alaska Natives, and 0.03% Native Hawaiian and other Pacific

Islander. Nearly 2% of individuals identified with two or more races and 22.2% of the total population were of Hispanic or Latino origin of any race (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). Orange County, where Orlando is located, had mixed voting patterns in the 2004 and 2008 presidential elections, with half of the voters casting votes for Democrat John Kerry and the remaining half for Republican George W. Bush in 2004, and the majority of votes going to Democrat Barack Obama in 2008. The mayor of Orlando, Buddy Dyer (2003-present), is a Democrat.

In Orlando, 12.9% of families and 16% of individuals live below the national poverty level. While a homeless count specific to the city of Orlando was not available, a 2009 point-in-time count in the central Florida area (including Orange, Osceloa, and Seminole counties) revealed 3,970 homeless individuals. The Homeless Services Network of Central Florida (2009) estimates that 9,887 persons experienced homelessness in this region.

Like many cities in the U.S., Orlando has enacted several restrictive measures that significantly impact people who are homeless:

In 1996, the City passed an ordinance that all panhandlers must obtain a permit to ask people for money on [the] City's sidewalks and streets. In 2000, this was amended to restrict downtown panhandling to within designated areas (blue boxes) painted on sidewalks. Furthermore, in 2002, the City Code was again amended to prohibit lying or sitting on public sidewalks. Although this City Code gave guidance to local law enforcement, it had relatively little impact on the growing numbers of downtown homeless or chronic homeless

participating in this type of activity. (Mayor's Working Committee on Homelessness, 2003, p. 5)

The current analysis focused on more recent ordinances passed in Orlando, such as a 2006 law that restricts groups from sharing food with 25 or more people (more than twice a year) in each of the public parks covered by the ordinance. On April 4, 2007, Eric Montanez, a member of the Orlando Food Not Bombs organization, was the first person to be arrested under the city's ordinance that bans feeding large groups of people without a special permit. Montanez was eventually acquitted at trial. The controversial ordinance encountered protestation from local homeless advocates and in 2008 the American Civil Liberties Union sued the city, arguing that the regulations were unconstitutional. While a federal judge barred Orlando from enforcing the law in September 2008, by July 2010, the city of Orlando had successfully appealed the District Court's decision. The plaintiffs challenged the ruling by asking the full 11th Circuit U.S. District Court of Appeals to rehear the case (Santich, 2010).

In addition to the food distribution ordinance, the City Council approved an amendment to an existing panhandling ordinance in September 2007 that prohibits panhandling from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. daily. Currently, panhandling is legal only in rectangular boxes painted on the sidewalk during the day (NLCHP & NCH, 2009, p. 38). In 2010, the city reduced the number of permitted panhandling boxes from 36 to 27. Restrictive measures, such as the ban on distributing food to 25 or more people

and panhandling ordinances, are based on stereotypes of dependency and negative attributions of the homeless.

In addition to the three "restrictive" cities of Los Angeles, Atlanta, and Orlando, two "contrast" cities Portland and Seattle and their respective newspaper articles and editorials were examined. Portland and Seattle serve as "progressive" comparison cities due to their alternative approaches to addressing homelessness.

Portland, Oregon. Located in the Pacific Northwest of the United States, the city of Portland has a population of 548,988 people (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). Of Portland residents who identify with one race, nearly 79% are white (74% non-Hispanic white), 6.4% Black or African American, 6.5% Asian, 1.1% American Indian and Alaska Natives, and 0.5% Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander. Approximately 4% of individuals identified with two or more races and 8.8% of the total population were of Hispanic or Latino origin of any race (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). Based on election results from Multnomah County, where Portland is the county seat, the majority of voters supported a Democrat for president in the 2004 and 2008 elections. On the federal level, a Republican has not represented a significant portion of Portland in the U.S. House of Representatives since 1975. Both of Oregon's senators, Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley, are from Portland and are also both Democrats. Sam Adams, a Democrat and the current mayor of Portland, became the city's first openly gay mayor in 2009.

In Portland, 11% of families and 16.1% of individuals live below official poverty thresholds compared to 11.1% of families and 14.3% of individuals

nationally (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009, 2010). The *2011 Point-in-time Count of Homelessness in Portland/Multnomah County, Oregon* (Smock) identified a total of 4,655 homeless people in the county (as defined by HUD). Of this number, 1,718 were unsheltered individuals (e.g., sleeping outdoors, in a vehicle, or abandoned building), 1,009 were temporarily housed individuals (e.g., sleeping in emergency shelters or motels), and an additional 1,928 individuals were sleeping in transitional housing for the homeless (Smock, 2011). Almost half were families with children (49%). People of Color are overrepresented in Portland's homeless population. Eighteen percent of homeless persons describe themselves as Black or African American while only 6% of the city's population is Black or African American (Smock, 2011, p. 27).

Portland passed multiple sit-lie and anti-camping ordinances throughout the 2000s which have either expired or been ruled unconstitutional by the courts. For instance, the Portland City Council passed a law that prohibited camping anywhere on public property in the city, arguing that homeless people were "creating unsafe and unsanitary living situations which pose a threat to peace, health and safety of themselves and other citizens of the City" (Liese, 2006, p.1445). Advocates contested that few individuals were likely to pose such a threat and that the City Council "passed the anti-camping ordinance out of a desire to move the city's homeless 'residents' out of sight and to encourage them to leave Portland" (Liese, 2006, p. 1445). Much like the sit-lie ordinance, which has faced numerous protests, the prohibition on camping was ruled unconstitutional only to be revisited again in

the following years. While the city has attempted to address concerns about homelessness through the passage of restrictive policies, a unique aspect of Portland is the City Council and mayor approved, permanent "tent city" site called Dignity Village.

Dignity Village originated in December 2000 when a group of eight homeless women and men set up tents on public land in response to Portland's anti-camping ban being lifted. While Dignity Village was mobile and faced the threat of police sweeps between December 2000 and September 2001, the group came to a compromise with city officials and permanently moved to Sunderland Yard, a city-owned property seven miles from downtown. Dignity Village is a self-governed and self-funded community whose mission is to function as:

> A dynamic self-help environment that provides a participatory framework for supporting each other, while simultaneously encouraging individual residents to more effectively help themselves at a personal level. This occurs through involvement that builds community among the people going through the process together. (NCH, 2010, p. 12)

Dignity Village implements five standards of behavior for those living in their community. These rules consist of the prohibition of violence, illegal substances or alcohol on or around the premises, stealing, disruptive behavior of any kind, and requires residents to be a productive community member by working ten hours per week and contributing to the site's overall upkeep and welfare. After 90 consecutive

days of residing at Dignity Village, residents become voting members and have the privilege of making decisions and serving on the village council (NCH, 2010).

Dignity Village partners with a local non-profit organization called Street Roots, whose mission is to create "income opportunities for people experiencing homelessness and poverty by producing a newspaper and other media that are catalysts for individual and social change" (Street Roots, 2012). Since 1998, Street Roots has published a bi-weekly newspaper that addresses news and commentary on social and economic justice issues within the community. More than 70 active vendors sell the publication, a resource guide that contains a comprehensive list of services for people experiencing homelessness and advocacy efforts to influence policy makers, the general public, and the non-profit homeless and housing industry (Street Roots, 2012).

Dignity Village and Street Roots primarily provide shorter-term solutions to people experiencing homelessness (e.g., temporary shelter, part-time work). To provide long-term solutions to homelessness the city of Portland and Multnomah County implemented a 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness (called "Home Again") in 2005. The Portland Housing Bureau oversees the plan and they envision institutional change rather than "shuffling homeless people from service to service and back to the street" (Portland Housing Bureau, 2007, para. 2). Adopting a "Housing First" model (see the National Alliance to End Homelessness website for more information, http://www.endhomelessness.org/pages/housing_first), one of the primary goals is to get homeless people into stable, permanent housing. Other strategies include

stopping the discharge of people from institutions such as jails and hospitals into homelessness; improving street outreach; increasing economic opportunities for homeless people; making the rent assistance system more effective; and increasing the supply of permanent supportive housing. The city and county proposed the creation of 1,600 new housing units for chronically homeless individuals and 600 new units for homeless families by 2015. While this particular goal has not yet been reached, the city and county have documented several significant outcomes since the 10-Year Plan was put into action in 2005. For example, the 2007 annual summary reported that 534 chronically homeless people and 815 homeless families were moved into permanent housing, and 179 units of permanent supportive housing opened that year (Portland Housing Bureau, 2008). More recently, the 2010 annual report indicated that 2,272 households moved from homelessness to permanent housing, including 544 chronically homeless individuals, 396 families, and 288 survivors of domestic violence (Portland Housing Bureau, 2011). Other positive outcomes include 957 individuals that were connected to housing and support services upon discharge from institutions (e.g., hospitals, psychiatric institutions, jails) and 1,112 individuals secured employment with an additional 4,852 people receiving employment services and/or job training (Portland Housing Bureau, 2011). Although significant needs remain, the city of Portland and Multnomah County have made considerable progress in addressing homelessness in their community.

     Seattle, Washington. The city of Seattle, located in the state of Washington, has a population of 594,005 with 71.6% of residents identifying as white (68.6% non-

Hispanic white), 7.7% Black or African American, 12.8% Asian, nearly 1%

American Indian and Alaska Natives, and 0.5% Native Hawaiian and other Pacific

Islander. Approximately 4% of individuals identified with two or more races and

5.9% of the total population were of Hispanic or Latino origin of any race (U.S.

Census Bureau, 2009). Notably, Seattle is described as one of the most politically

progressive cities in North America, with the majority of voters supporting

Democratic candidates. Only two precincts in Seattle had a majority of votes for

Republican George W. Bush in the 2004 presidential election and all precincts in

Seattle voted for Democrat Barack Obama in the 2008 presidential election. The

mayor of Seattle, Mike McGinn (2010-present), is a Democrat.

In Seattle, 6.5% of families and 12.2% of individuals live below the national

poverty level (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). While a homeless count specific to the

city of Seattle was not available, a 2010 point-in-time census conducted in King

County, where Seattle is located, revealed 8,937 homeless individuals (Committee to

End Homelessness in King County [CEHKC], 2010). This includes 6,178 people

living in shelters and transitional programs and 2,759 people who were without

shelter and living outdoors. Of those living in emergency shelter and transitional

housing programs, 55% were families with children, 33% single adult men, 11%

single adult women, and less than 1% unaccompanied youth. With the exception of

Asians and Pacific Islanders, people of Color are significantly overrepresented in the

homeless population. "While people of Color comprise approximately 27% of the

general population in King County, they represent 57% of people who are homeless"
(CEHKC, 2011, para. 8).

Overall, Seattle is considered politically progressive on social issues,
however, it is not lacking in policies that criminalize homelessness. Seattle has the
distinction of being the first U.S. city to pass an ordinance banning sitting or lying on
public sidewalks in 1993. The ban is applied between 7 a.m. and 9 p.m. in the
downtown area and police are required to give a warning before issuing a $50
citation. The sit-lie ban remains active in Seattle, but enforcement is weak with only
77 citations issued in 2008 and 57 citations issued in 2009 (Knight, 2010). Other
policies affecting homeless people in Seattle include the enforcement of aggressive
sweeps of homeless encampments. Executive Director of Real Change, Tim Harris,
claimed that Seattle law enforcement officers, as well as Department of
Transportation contractors, were forcing people from land with little to no advance
notice (Talvi, 2008). The "eradication" teams were reportedly destroying people's
belongings (e.g., tents, sleeping bags) with machetes and denying people access to
their property once clearings were initiated. In 2010, a measure to ban aggressive
panhandling including "blocking a person or using intimidating words or gestures
while asking for something" was passed by the City Council, but ultimately vetoed by
the City Mayor, Mike McGinn (Heffter, 2010, para. 5).

Like Portland, Seattle has developed distinctive short- and long-term
strategies for addressing homelessness. In a 2004 report, the U.S. Department of
Housing and Urban Development recognized Seattle as one of seven cities that had

adopted successful community-wide methods to reduce homelessness. HUD documented how needs among homeless people were identified, what type of long-term plan was in place, how strategies were implemented and funded, and assessed outcomes. The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, originally passed by Congress in 1987, provides federal financial assistance through HUD to homeless individuals and families. At its inception, individual organizations from across the nation submitted applications for homeless assistance funds. Since 1994, HUD requires each community to submit a single, collaborative Continuum of Care application to facilitate community-wide planning and coordination of programs. Seattle was identified as one of four communities (Boston, Columbus, Philadelphia, and Seattle) that provided extensive programs and services in all aspects of their Continuum of Care program (HUD, 2004, p. xvi). One strategy highlighted as a strength for Seattle was the Downtown Emergency Service Center's Homeless, Outreach, Stabilization, and Transition Project (HOST), which offers transitional and permanent housing for targeted programs or institutions (e.g., drop-in centers for women, hospitals, jails). Seattle has also implemented innovative programs that are run by non-profit organizations. For instance, Real Change addresses immediate needs while working for structural change and long-term solutions to poverty. They offer three integrated programs: vendor services that employ 350 to 400 low-income and homeless individuals each month; *Real Change* newspaper, a "street newspaper" sold by low-income and homeless women and men to provide an income without panhandling; and advocacy efforts focused on economic justice (Real Change, 2012).

Similar to Portland, its neighbor to the south, Seattle also hosts a series of homeless encampments known as "tent cities." However, unlike Dignity Village in Portland, the tent communities in Seattle are not permanent and are required to move every 90 days. Tent City 3 began in 2000 when an organized encampment moved over 27 times in two years within Seattle. After a court challenge between the organization and the city, the city attorney, City Council, and the State Superior Court approved a consent decree allowing the encampment to remain in one location for up to 90 days. The current mission statement of Tent City 3 and Tent City 4 (established in 2006) is to provide a safe place for homeless people to spend the night and keep their belongings; to give a homeless person the privacy and dignity of their own residence (a tent); to develop a sense of community for homeless people who are isolated and alone; and to empower homeless people by being responsible for their own community (NCH, 2010).

King County has over 8,900 homeless people on any given night and many live in the city of Seattle. To initiate long-term solutions to reduce homelessness, the county, in collaboration with seven other founding organizations including the city of Seattle and the United Way of King County, implemented a 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness in 2005. Together they formed the Committee to End Homelessness in King County and put forth a plan that includes providing rent and utility assistance, job training, employment and education, health care, securing 9,500 units of housing, increasing the efficiency of the existing system, building public and political support for the cause, and measuring and reporting outcomes (CEHKC, 2012).

Annual progress reports document the accomplishments made by the CEHKC and its partners since the adoption of the 10-Year Plan. In 2007, their efforts resulted in the addition of 486 housing units for formerly homeless individuals and families and they assisted 3,680 households in leaving homelessness (CEHKC, 2007). Two years later, CEHKC reported that the point-in-time count of people living on the streets and in emergency shelter dropped four percent and they opened 1,065 new housing units (CEHKC, 2009). The coalition has made significant strides in addressing homelessness in King County and across the U.S., 243 regional, county, and statewide plans from Birmingham, Alabama to Salt Lake City, Utah have been put into action. There remains a great need for ambitious structural level, short- and long-term solutions to be considered in numerous cities and states around the nation.

Collectively, the cities of Los Angeles, Atlanta, Orlando, and contrast cities Portland and Seattle, have all responded to increasing rates of homelessness by passing laws which restrict people without shelter from performing life sustaining activities (e.g., sleeping, eating). The portrayal of these city ordinances, along with media representations of homeless people and homelessness, are discussed in detail in the following chapter.

Chapter Five

Findings and Discussion

Newspaper Portrayals of People Experiencing Homelessness

Analysis revealed that newspaper articles and editorials in both "restrictive" and "progressive" U.S. cities stereotyped people experiencing homelessness. Consistent with previous research (e.g., Kendall, 2005; Min, 1999; Lind & Danowski, 1999), homeless people were described in terms of stigmatized descriptors (e.g., mentally ill, intimidating, dirty, smelly) and behaviors (e.g., substance use, crime, theft, violence). Positive characterizations (e.g., hardworking, persevering) were rare.

Negative descriptions of homeless people. In 41% of Los Angeles news articles, 44% of Atlanta articles, and nearly half of Portland's articles mentioned substance use and/or mental illness when describing homeless people. Approximately one-fourth of Orlando (24%) and Seattle (25%) news articles referenced substance use and/or mental illness when discussing homeless people. One poignant example of the association of homelessness with mental illness comes from the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. In response to a protest to repeal the city's anti-panhandling ordinance, Senator Vincent Fort stated, "A lot of homeless panhandlers are mental patients off their medication, and they want to be arrested so they can get a meal and get off the street" (Montgomery, 2006, p. D8). Such remarks take on greater importance when made by an elected state official, an individual considered (by some) to be an authority on local issues. The inclusion of the Senator's remark in the newspaper may influence the public to believe that

individualistic factors and behaviors, such as mental illness and panhandling, are primary causes for homelessness. This misperception reduces a complicated structural problem to 'criminal' behavior. Disparaging mental health remarks also reinforce stereotypes about people experiencing homelessness as unstable or "crazy" and contribute to further stigmatization.

Associations of homelessness with crime, theft, or violence were also common, occurring in 21% of Los Angeles news articles, 24% of Atlanta articles, 28% of Orlando articles, 38% of Portland articles and 19% of Seattle news articles. For example, the revitalization of the Parramore District in downtown Orlando was described as "mired in crime, poverty and low rates of homeownership" (Schlueb, 2005, p. A1). While it was reported that some residents were concerned about the area's eventual gentrification, investors and landowners were focused on ridding the neighborhood of homeless people.

> Van Gelder, the Parramore landowner, said development won't take off in Parramore unless problems with the homeless and crime are solved.
> "Until they get rid of the coalition and enforce the law and get rid of the crackheads and drug dealers and prostitutes, nothing is going to happen," he said. (Schlueb, 2005, p. A1)

These findings are consistent with Min (1999) and Kendall's (2005) assertion that homelessness is associated with socially dysfunctional behaviors. This image of the homeless limits how news media consumers understand issues related to homeless people and the larger problem of homelessness.

Associations of homelessness with criminality were present in *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* and *Orlando Sentinel* coverage. In response to the passage of ordinances outlawing panhandling and urban camping in Gwinnett County in Georgia, Police Major Chris Spradley stated, "there is a direct correlation between urban camping and crime" (Smith, 2006, p. A1). In Orlando, the anti-feeding ordinance was defended by the assertion that the city "banned groups from serving meals in the park and other city property downtown, saying that serving the meals led to increased crime, litter and panhandling" (Hunt, 2006, p. B1). In these cases, the framing of anti-homeless ordinances was associated with crime. Playing on the public's fear of crime, the consequences for presenting these 'solutions' to homelessness as crime deterrents influences what policies the public perceives as necessary to address homelessness. The high frequency of classist stereotyping perpetuates the association of homelessness with "deviancy." By highlighting negative characteristics, media representations contribute to internal attributions for homelessness and increased support for restrictive homeless policy (Mendelson, 1999).

News articles and editorials were also coded for other types of negative descriptions such as panhandlers making housed people feel unsafe or the appearance or body odor of homeless people (see Table 4). These types of negative descriptions of homeless people were present in approximately one-fourth of Atlanta (24%), Portland (27%), and Seattle (22%) news articles, while fewer were identified in Los Angeles (7%) and Orlando (15%) news articles. Negative characterizations were

especially likely in the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* where 60% of editorials included unfavorable characterizations of homeless people, followed by one-fourth of Portland (26%) and Seattle (25%) editorials, and approximately one-sixth of Los Angeles (17%) and Orlando (15%) editorials. One Portland news article, which provided a negative illustration of homelessness, claimed:

> Downtown business owners say vagrancy and panhandling are growing obstacles to competing with businesses in the suburbs. They tell stories of homeless people sleeping in their doorways, badgering customers for change and generally making the central city less pleasant to visit. (Griffin, 2007, p. A01)

In another example from the *Portland Oregonian*, the author did not veil her anti-homeless beliefs stating, "the homeless people we see on the streets of Portland are so often scruffy and undeserving" (Gardner, 2008, para. 5).

A particularly disturbing news story published by *Los Angeles Times*, but based in Atlanta, focused on the "Bum Bot 2000," a rolling, remote-controlled robot created by bar owner Rufus Terrill to "flush out the prostitutes and pushers" who congregate near his business (Fausset, 2008, A12). The story included details about how the robot was constructed and operated; it was built with an infrared camera (that transmitted video back to a big-screen television at Terrill's bar) and a homemade cannon, which sprayed cold water at up to 200 pounds per square inch. Terrill believed that the residents of a nearby emergency homeless shelter made up the "sketchy, drug-dealing crowd " and that the shelter attracted "the kind of people who

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have broken into his bar...and harassed and mugged his neighbors and clients"
(Fausset, 2008, p. A12). The article provided a brief counter point to Terrill's robot
invention by interviewing Anita Beaty, Executive Director of the Metro Atlanta Task
Force for the Homeless, and presented statistics about homelessness in the region,
however, the story ended by praising Terrill and his tactics to disperse groups of
homeless people. The portrayal of this business owner as a "hero" sends a highly
problematic message to news audiences and promotes individualistic solutions to
address homeless people's "deviancy" and does little to contribute to the reduction
and/or elimination of homelessness.

These findings are supported by previous research examining media
depictions of homeless people (e.g., Lind & Danowski, 1999). Taken together, the
majority of news articles and editorials in this analysis described homeless people
unfavorably, reflecting widely held stereotypes about unhoused individuals. The
most frequent stereotypes were related to mental illness and deviant behaviors (e.g.,
loitering, crime, substance use).

Positive descriptions of homeless people. In contrast to the abundance of
news stories and editorials that highlighted negative characteristics, few news articles
(Los Angeles, 8%; Atlanta, 7%; Orlando, 6%; Portland, 7%; Seattle, 14%) and
editorials (Los Angeles, 10%; Atlanta, 9%; Orlando, 11%; Portland, 17%; Seattle,
4%) described homeless people positively. Favorable stories about homeless people
were sometimes presented in terms of exceptionalism framing (Kendall, 2005).
Exceptionalism frames focus on people who have overcome poverty or moved

beyond homelessness and suggest that others can do the same if they persevere (Kendall, 2005). Two *Los Angeles Times* articles are illustrative of this type of framing. One article described a formerly homeless cocaine addict who contracted HIV from dirty needles, subsequently got "clean," got his life back together, and became a housing rights lawyer for the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles (Garrison, 2008). A second article focused on a woman who overcame the odds (i.e., grew up poor and homeless, was bullied at school, and had parents suffering from mental illness and drug addiction) to earn a full scholarship to college and graduated with a degree as the top student in her department at age 20 (Lindsey, 2008). While the intent is not to diminish these individuals' stories of triumph, it is important to note that these types of news stories focus only on individual initiative and provide little context about broader life circumstances (i.e., one where structural barriers and lack of support/services contributed to their situations). According to Kendall (2005), these stories "[ignore] the more typical experiences of the poor and homeless and leaves media audiences with an individualistic look at poverty and homelessness that does not focus on the larger societal issues associated with poverty" (p. 123).

In the *Seattle Times*, positive descriptions of homeless people were typically associated with those living in tent cities. "Camp Quixote was set up…to protest a new city ordinance that makes it illegal to sit, lie down, sell things or ask for money within 6 feet of a building downtown" (Byrd, 2007, p. B8). When the camp was asked to leave under police order, the campers were described by Police Commander Tor Bjornstad as doing a "really good job packing, cleaning up, and leaving" (Byrd,

2007, p. B8). While opposition to tent cities from local community members was present, in one move to Kirkland, Washington, Tent City 4 received a different community response—one of acceptance. Church Pastor Mike Anderson, who himself stayed at Tent City for two nights in the winter of 2006, claimed, "Tent City has been such a model citizen. It's been well-run, and the people have been good neighbors" (Peters, 2007, p. B3). Editorials that characterized homeless people favorably also focused on tent city residents. In a Seattle editorial, Bruce Thomas, the camp's elected adviser, was described as "articulate" and "persistent as the rain that tapped the food-tent tarp" (Riley, 2007, p. B6).

These positive descriptions seemed, in part, to be due to the perception of these communities as well organized and effectively run. In Portland and Seattle, two cities with established tent cities, these communities have demonstrated their capacity for self-governance and compliance with rules of conduct set forth by each of their respective councils. For example, Portland's Dignity Village sets strict guidelines against the use of alcohol and drugs in or around the premises and requires each resident to be productive community members by working ten hours per week and contributing to the site's overall upkeep. Adherence to these two standards of behavior run counter to widespread negative stereotypes and individualistic attributions emphasizing laziness and drug- and alcohol-dependence. Homeless individuals who are associated with tent cities may also be considered as exceptions to the larger homeless population, much like those described in exceptionalism framing stories (Kendall, 2005).

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Portland editorials tended to focus on positive characteristics of people who had successfully participated in social service programs, providing statistics such as "85% who graduate don't return to the streets" (referring to New Avenues, a transitional housing unit for homeless youth; "Lost and found," 2009, para. 9) or how JOIN "helped 282 households, 77 families with 148 kids and 102 chronically homeless people get off the streets and into housing….Almost all of the people helped stay in housing" (Hovde, 2009, para. 11). While these illustrations of homelessness demonstrate successful outcomes for social service programs, presenting these statistics without providing the larger context of widespread poverty and homelessness can be interpreted by news audiences as justification for reducing funding or support for similar programs because seemingly enough is being done to assist the poor and homeless.

Missing discourse of race, gender, and "real" homeless people. Although overt classist stereotyping was well documented, explicit references to racist and sexist descriptions of homeless people were relatively uncommon. People of Color experiencing homelessness were described negatively in only two percent of *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* articles, and were not present in any of the remaining four news publications. Likewise, it was rare for the gender of homeless women and men to be explicitly negatively characterized (Los Angeles, 3%; Atlanta, 2%; Orlando, 4%; Portland, 4%; Seattle, 0%; see Table 8). Although single adult men and homeless people of Color, particularly African Americans, are disproportionately represented among the homeless population, relatively little discussion was provided in the

newspapers reviewed. Consistent with previous research (e.g., Bullock et al., 2001), news stories were largely absent of any in-depth race analysis. Based on the overrepresentation of people of Color among the homeless population in four of the five U.S. cities included in this study (data was unavailable for Atlanta; see Tables 1 and 2), explicit reference to or discussion about the racial and ethnic composition of the homeless population may be viewed as unnecessary due to the strong association between poverty, homelessness, and racial and ethnic minority status. Nevertheless, this association may activate racist steretoypes even when race is not overtly mentioned (e.g., Whaley & Link, 1998; Gilens, 1996). This lends support to critical race theorists' assertion that racism is viewed as "normal and natural" (Ladson-Billings, 1998, p. 11).

The lack of discussion of "real" homeless people was also notable. While analysis of "deserving" and "undeserving" homeless groups were planned, no clear conclusions could be drawn due to the low frequency in which subgroups of homeless were addressed in the articles (see Table 5). Families and/or children were featured in only 3% of Los Angeles news articles, 4% in Atlanta, 5% in Orlando, 3% in Portland, and 2% in Seattle news articles. Similarly, homeless veterans were rarely referenced and were central in 2% of Atlanta news articles and were not featured in any other news source (news or editorial format). By far, most references to people experiencing homelessness were generic (i.e., "the homeless"). Consequently, portrayals of homeless people as a homogenous group, and one that is primarily

described negatively (e.g., deviant), may contribute to societal indifference for addressing the problem of homelessness.

These findings indicate there were far fewer instances of positive than negative descriptors of homeless people in both news and editorial formats. Mental illness and substance use were frequently associated with homelessness. The abundance of stories emphasizing negative attributes and the lack of counter images that contextualize the economic dynamics of poverty and homelessness confirm widely held classist stereotypes (e.g., dangerous, criminal) and run the risk of encouraging further social distancing and "othering" of an already marginalized group.

News and Editorial Framing

Thematic and episodic frames. The overwhelming majority of news stories and editorials thematically framed issues related to homelessness (see Table 5). For example, 80% of *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* news articles and 91% of its editorials included thematic frames. Thematic framing in news reports often emphasized how data on homelessness was collected or provided statistics about poverty and homelessness. It was far less likely that personal stories of homeless individuals or families were depicted. This contributes to the issue of the homeless being regarded as "faceless" and not being considered "real" people as evidenced by the low frequency in which subgroups of homeless people were featured in news articles and editorials.

It is also the case that large numbers of thematic stories were present because of the stigma attached to being homeless. Classist stereotypes contribute to the "othering" of homeless people, whereby individuals experiencing homelessness are regarded as "different" from others, particularly middle- and upper-class people (Kendall, 2005). As Kendall (2005) argues, thematic frames provide a "relatively sterile perspective" about homelessness for the public (p. 129). Thematic articles that rely on statistics and focus on rates of homelessness may direct attention away from more important issues, such as the causes and consequences of homelessness, and therefore influence public perception about the importance of the issue overall. While previous research has demonstrated that thematic stories can elicit structural attributions for poverty (Iyengar, 1990), findings from this study indicate that, for the most part, there was a lack of discussion about attributions for homelessness.

Causal attributions in news articles. One of the main goals of this study was to examine if homelessness was portrayed as an individual or structural problem. The analysis revealed that the majority of Los Angeles (61%), Atlanta (59%), Orlando (75%), and Seattle (75%) news articles and less than half of Portland (43%) news articles did not include causal attributions for homelessness. Among the limited number of news articles in which attributions were present, structural explanations or a combination of causal attributions, typically structural and individualistic, were most frequent (see Table 6).

When policies about homelessness were discussed the majority of Atlanta (63%) and Orlando (56%) news stories, and nearly half of Portland (48%) and Seattle

(46%) news stories focused on policies that curbed individual behaviors while Los Angeles did this to a lesser degree (17%). During the analytic timeframe, each city proposed or enacted one or more anti-homeless measure. This resulted in *Los Angeles Times* news stories focusing on ordinances banning sleeping on the beach, city parks, public streets, or in parked cars, sitting on benches, and the Safer City Initiative. *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* news articles primarily discussed anti-panhandling and urban camping ordinances. The majority of *Orlando Sentinel* articles that included discussion of the city's policies focused on the restrictions on sharing food with homeless people (and people congregating/loitering at the feedings) and panhandling in downtown areas. *Portland Oregonian* news stories focused on the city's sit-lie ordinance and the overnight camping ban, and *Seattle Times* articles discussed homeless sweeps to clean out greenbelt areas where homeless people were camping, homeless encampments (tent cities), and aggressive panhandling.

The lack of discussion about causal attributions for homelessness in the majority of news articles contributes to a lack of context for understanding homelessness. Without clear explanations of the complex and structural contributors to homelessness, readers may assume that homelessness results from dispositional causes, a misjudgment known as the "fundamental attribution error" (Ross, 1977). This, in addition to the tendency of newspapers to focus on devalued characteristics of homeless people and a larger overall focus on policies that address individual behavior, may leave readers with a limited understanding of the causes of and solutions to homelessness.

Causal attributions in editorials. A larger number of newspaper editorials

included causal attributions for homelessness compared to the news articles. This

was true for the *Los Angeles Times* (62%), *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* (64%), and

Portland Oregonian (57%). Over a third of *Orlando Sentinel* (35%) and *Seattle*

Times (37%) editorials mentioned causal attributions. The most frequent attributions

for all five newspapers were either solely structural or a combination of attributions,

of which individualistic and fatalistic attributions were most common. Homeless

advocates, academic scholars, and/or social service providers contributed the majority

of editorials that presented solely structural attributions for homelessness. For

instance, Joel John Roberts, Chief Executive Officer of People Assisting The

Homeless (PATH), a network of agencies working together to end homelessness in

Southern California, remarked that "Only when our community leaders can agree that

the real solution to this societal plague called homelessness is providing decent and

affordable housing for everyone will L.A.'s version of a walled city be no more"

(2006, p. B13). Structural attributions for homelessness are also evident in a

statement by Genny Nelson, co-founder of Sisters of the Road, a Portland non-profit

organization:

> If we want to address homelessness in the U.S., we need to stop looking at
>
> homeless people as "them," and we need to start looking at us. If we believe
>
> our government represents us, it is we, the people, who must pressure our
>
> elected officials to make a real commitment to restore funding for affordable

housing. Outlawing homelessness won't make it go away; nothing ends

homelessness like a home. (2009, para. 12)

Nelson not only addresses the need for additional funding for housing, but also

criminalizing homelessness through policies such as the sit-lie ordinance in Portland.

While structural attributions in editorials appeared somewhat frequently (see Table

6), mixed attributions for homelessness were, for the most part, more common in the

five news publications.

A trend documented within the editorial analysis was the inclusion of mixed

attributions for homelessness, with the most prevalent combination consisting of

individualistic (e.g., substance use) and fatalistic (e.g., mental illness) causes for

homelessness. Douglas MacKinnon, press secretary for former Senator Bob Dole,

remarked:

If we are going to be honest about the homeless, then we also have to admit

that many are beyond any real help or hope. A large number of the homeless

suffer from drug addiction and/or alcoholism, are mentally challenged or have

decided to escape from the bounds of "normal" society. (2005, p. M5)

MacKinnon (2005) continues on to state that the country does have an obligation to

help "the rest" of the homeless, particularly homeless and hungry children. This

commentary provides an inconsistent message about the causes of homelessness and

draws on notions of deservingness (e.g., homeless children as deserving) to discuss

potential approaches to combating homelessness. Overall, the results from the

editorial analysis reflect previous research findings demonstrating that attributions for homelessness are complex and multifaceted in nature (Lee et al., 1990).

Arguments Supporting Restrictive Ordinances

Two main arguments in favor of restrictive ordinances were identified: 1) the reduction of crime and homelessness; and 2) addressing public safety and public health concerns. Law enforcement officials, business representatives, and city officials primarily endorsed restrictive policies. Given that news stories about anti-homeless ordinances emphasized curbing individual behaviors (and not structural level changes), it is not surprising that support for individual level approaches to homelessness was also emphasized. Historically, "anti-nuisance" or "vagrancy" laws were implemented to punish the unemployed and people who were not financially self-sufficient (Hopkins & Nackerud, 1999; Wachholz, 2005). These laws, which made behaviors such as sitting in public spaces for a certain length of time illegal, were favored to protect the interests of the more privileged (e.g., business owners, homeowners). This coupled with the belief that people experiencing homelessness are dependent on others to provide for them (e.g., food, shelter) and lack a strong work ethic contributes to legislation aimed at individual behavior.

Reducing crime and homelessness. A key argument made in favor of restrictive ordinances is the reduction of crime and homelessness. In this context, examples of "crime" include theft, drug sales or drug use, prostitution, "vagrancy," and loitering, particularly in the vicinity of businesses. It could be argued that several of these so-called crimes, such as vagrancy and loitering, are a result of not having a

permanent residence. Further, the selling of drugs or prostitution could also be ways to obtain monetary or material resources that are otherwise not possible due to structural barriers (e.g., low-wage jobs, lack of education).

The argument for the reduction of crime and homelessness was most prominent in Los Angeles, where it was the central platform of the Safer City Initiative. Police Chief William J. Bratton asserted that the Safer City Initiative had resulted in "seeing fewer people sleeping on the streets…seeing few[er] tents erected, more officers patrolling the area and we have more arrests" (Winton, 2006, p. B5). Noticeably absent from Chief Bratton's description of SCI's effectiveness is information supporting the actual reduction of people experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles. Interestingly, the next year Chief Bratton acknowledged that:

> the Safer City Initiative essentially has shifted some of downtown's homeless and mentally ill residents to other parts of Los Angeles. "Is there some displacement? Certainly," Bratton said at a news conference..."But what's wrong with that in some respects? Why should one square mile of the city be impacted by something that's effectively a countywide problem?" Bratton said. "So if there is displacement, all well and good." (Heland &Winton, 2007, p. B2)

In this case, success of the Safer City Initiative was defined as less visible homelessness and higher rates of citations and incarceration, which address individual behaviors but not broader structural factors that contribute to homelessness.

In Atlanta, crime prevention was also used as a vehicle for passing anti-homeless ordinances. An example of this was included in a news story about a recently passed policy that imposed restrictions on public solicitations for money, including bans in specific locations of Gwinnett County. At the same time, the Gwinnett board also voted to prohibit people from putting up tents, sleeping, or storing possessions on county property despite the fact that officials could not cite a single instance of homeless people setting up shelters on public land. However, that did not prevent the passage of this particular ordinance. Police Chief Charlie Walters supported this measure saying, "We're trying to make sure this does not spread. We've got a lot of parks that have a lot of space. It's a preventive measure" (Smith, 2006, p. A1). The arguments for crime prevention and reduction in favor of anti-homeless policies appear to tap into larger societal fears of crime, even though crime rates have declined across the country. In both Los Angeles and Atlanta, preventing and/or reducing crime was a major component of the cities' platform to criminalize homelessness without advancing more productive strategies to combat the issue of homelessness.

Public safety and/or public health. In addition to reducing crime, support for restrictive policies was couched as promoting public safety and health. There was considerable overlap between the crime and public safety platforms. Arguments about safety draw on the stereotype that "homeless people are dangerous." In Seattle, arguments supporting an anti-panhandling ordinance, which would make it a misdemeanor to panhandle at highway on-ramps, off-ramps and 300 feet from

specific intersections, and the tearing down of homeless encampments, was framed as a public health and safety issue. Several articles included public safety and health language:

 The expectation is that this law will address public-safety issues and public-health concerns. (Krishnan, 2008, p. B5)

[Patricia McInturff, Human Services Director] said the cleanups are meant as a public-safety measure. "There have been a number of people who have run across the freeway," she said. (Pian Chan, 2007, p. B1)

[Dewey Potter, a spokeswoman for the Seattle Parks Department] said it was the city's duty to ensure parks are safe and usable for all citizens. (Martin, 2008, p. B1)

Similar claims about public safety and health were made to support Orlando's restrictions on sharing food with people in a public park. During a four-hour public hearing to vote on the ordinance, "City Council members said they were justified in approving the ban for public safety, sanitation and the simple fact that downtown parks aren't soup kitchens" (McKay, 2006, p. B1). Proponents of the feeding ban included residents, business owners, and downtown developer, Craig Ustler, who stated, "it is an essential step in keeping a clean, safe, vibrant city" (McKay, 2006, p. B1). Supporters of the anti-feeding ordinance also argued for the prevention of

crime, littering, and panhandling in and around the gatherings, demonstrating the intersection between the crime prevention/reduction and public safety arguments.

Several Orlando news stories that endorsed public safety or health concerns alluded to how the site of the "feedings," a public park, was intended for use by everyone and it was argued that these gatherings were preventing the general public (i.e., housed neighbors and businesses) from enjoying the space. It is notable that the concept of "everyone" did not include all people, but only those who were securely housed, employed, and well fed (i.e., not homeless). The adoption of restrictive ordinances, such as anti-panhandling and anti-feeding policies, is apt to be influenced by societal belief in meritocracy. In soliciting or accepting monetary or material resources (e.g., spare change, food), homeless people who engage in these behaviors challenge widely held beliefs about individualism and hard work. This results in homeless people being considered undeserving of support or sympathy and helps to justify ordinances that restrict homeless people's use of public space.

Taken together, the key arguments in favor of restrictive ordinances may have assisted private citizens, business interests, and local governments in passing policies that target panhandling, camping, and sharing food with homeless people. However, these strategies are shortsighted and fail to address long-term solutions and structural causes of homelessness.

Arguments Against Restrictive Ordinances

Despite the number of articles that included support for anti-homeless policies, opposition to the ordinances was also strongly supported. Arguments

against restrictive ordinances focused on two key areas: 1) the need for structural-level solutions (as opposed to individual-level change), such as addressing the lack of supportive housing and services; and 2) the violation of civil rights.

Need for structural-level solutions. Structural factors (e.g., low-wage work, cuts in social services, low-cost housing shortages, lack of affordable health care) are well documented as the primary causes of U.S. homelessness. Lack of institutional support and access to adequate housing for survivors of domestic violence and people with mental illness and/or substance addictions also contribute to homelessness. A prominent argument made in opposition to anti-homeless ordinances, particularly ones that restricted or prohibited camping and/or sleeping outdoors, centered on the lack of supportive housing. One example, which speaks to the need for additional supportive housing was reported in the *Los Angeles Times*:

> Six homeless people sued the city over [an ordinance that prohibits sleeping on sidewalks] in 2003. As part of the settlement, the city reportedly agreed to enforce the law only between 6 a.m. and 9 p.m. and to apply it equally citywide. Most important, the city agreed that it will enforce the law at night only after it has built or added 1,250 units of supportive housing for the homeless, with 50% of those units downtown. (Hymon & Zahniser, 2007, p. B3)

In this case, the city of Los Angeles recognized that indeed there existed a lack of supportive housing for people experiencing homelessness and that enforcing a sleeping ban without taking steps to address the need for housing was unproductive.

Additional examples calling for adequate housing came from *Seattle Times* and *Portland Oregonian*. The first two quotes come from homeless men who were interviewed by the newspapers:

> Joe said he polices the camp — "no drinking, no funny stuff... we're clean" — and is befuddled why the city would crack down without helping provide other housing. "I tell the city, if you can't accommodate us with reasonable housing, leave us alone." (Martin, 2008, p. 2)

> Scott Zalitis, 42, said he's been on the streets for about a month. He has high blood pressure and seizures…and is getting the runaround on collecting disability benefits. He knows lots of people are down, especially families with young children hurt by the recession. "But we need shelter, too. There's not enough shelters for us," he said. (Har, 2009, para. 9)

It was more often the case that advocates and people experiencing homelessness were interviewed in articles where opposition to restrictive ordinances was included. This was true with the argument calling for additional affordable housing and for legal measures taken to address anti-homeless ordinances. The following example includes legal advocacy by the Oregon Law Center on behalf of homeless people and the camping ban proposed in Portland.

> Punishing homeless people for sleeping outside is placing the burden of the lack of sufficient housing squarely on the shoulders of those who can do the least to remedy this problem, the suit says. The class-action suit will be filed

in U.S. District Court in Portland by the Oregon Law Center, a nonprofit legal aid organization, on behalf of four homeless Portlanders and "all others similarly situated." (Mayer, 2008, para. 3)

In addition to arguments concerning lack of housing, calls for broader structural changes by advocates were also common. In response to Assistant Chief George Gascon's plan for removing tent cities on Skid Row in Los Angeles:

> Several officials at downtown homeless services organization expressed concern that the kind of sweeps Gascon is talking about would get the homeless off skid row but not necessarily deal with the underlying issues. They worry that Gascon's plan would simply place more homeless people in the county's overcrowded jails or back on the street in other parts of the city where there is less enforcement....Moreover, they doubt there are enough shelter beds to accommodate the thousands of people who would need places to live if the tent cities were removed. (DiMassa & Winton, 2006, p. A1)

Structural appeals were also evident in a response to Seattle's proposed ordinance banning aggressive panhandling and Orlando's anti-feeding ordinance:

> Advocates for the homeless say that laws such as Issaquah's do nothing but push the problem elsewhere. "It's not going to change the situation," said Bill Block, project director for the Committee to End Homelessness in King County. "Cities need to deal with the barriers that cause people to become homeless in the first place." (Krishnan, 2008, p. B5)

U.S. District Judge Gregory Presnell made his opinion known while hearing

arguments from a city lawyer, who wants a lawsuit challenging Orlando's

homeless-feeding rules thrown out. "How does moving the problem around

address any legitimate public interest?" Presnell said. "You're not solving the

problem, just moving it around and perhaps making it worse." (Schlueb, 2008,

p. B3)

Violation of civil liberties. Another common argument against restrictive

ordinances involved the violation of civil liberties. Law professors, judges, service

providers, advocates, and homeless people themselves voiced opposition to various

anti-homeless measures. Several examples concerning civil rights violations come

from *Los Angeles Times*. Laurie Levenson, a professor at Loyola Law School, wrote

in response to a judge's ruling "that some Los Angeles police tactics in patrolling

downtown [were] unconstitutional." Levenson remarked:

It's an important decision...it reaffirms the right of the homeless not to be

subjected to unwarranted, suspicionless searches. Even if they don't have

much to their name, they still have their constitutional rights. (DiMassa &

Winton, 2006, p. A1)

Tulin Ozdeger, civil rights program director for the National Law Center on

Homelessness and Poverty in Washington, D.C, provided an additional illustration of

how anti-homeless policies violate civil liberties:

"Strict anti-panhandling laws are part of a broader tendency to criminalize

homelessness. If cities are using laws to restrict homeless people from

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employing themselves, it really shows a discriminatory approach to people who are homeless," Ozdeger said. (Glascock, 2008, p. A26)

A major victory for homeless people and their advocates was the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals' ruling that a Los Angeles law prohibiting sleeping, sitting or lying on public sidewalks constituted "cruel and unusual punishment" and violated the 8th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. This decision was based on the fact that the city did not have sufficient shelter beds and people in need of shelter had nowhere else to stay. The ordinance had been enforced 24 hours a day (Weinstein & DiMassa, 2006, p. A1).

Two examples of arguments advocating for the civil rights of homeless people were captured in *Seattle Times* and *Portland Oregonian*. The first excerpt is in response to Seattle's homeless encampment sweeps, the second from the *Portand Oregonian*:

> In June, managers at the Aloha Inn, an old motel on Aurora Avenue North that is used as transitional housing, met with city officials who wanted to clear out a nearby greenbelt. The Aloha's managers encouraged the city to first work with the people living in the greenbelt to find someplace else to go. Instead, in August, tents and equipment were removed by officers from Seattle police and the state Department of Corrections, said Dan Wise, Aloha's program manager. "It's pretty clear nobody who lives indoors would accept being treated this way," Wise said. "People who are living outdoors have rights, too." (Pian Chan, 2007, p. 1)

They want an end to the city's sit-lie and no-camping laws, which prohibit

people from blocking sidewalks and sleeping outside. "These two ordinances

are in violation of our human and constitutional civil rights," said Larry

Reynolds, a homeless veteran. "We are being targeted for being homeless and

poor." (Larabee, 2008, p. B03)

The primary cases made in opposition of restrictive homeless policies called

for structural level solutions and highlighted the violation of civil liberties. Unlike

the claims made in support of anti-homeless laws, arguments against the ordinances

have been grounded in documented needs (e.g., affordable housing) and the majority

of the time the civil rights of homeless people have been upheld by the courts. On the

other hand, support for restrictive ordinances heavily relied on anecdotal 'evidence'

and were largely based in stereotypes and fears of homeless people as "dangerous,"

"criminal," and "dirty."

Summary

The majority of newspaper reports and editorials from both "restrictive" and

"progressive" cities presented homeless people unfavorably by associating

homelessness with devalued characteristics and behaviors (e.g., mental illness,

substance use, crime, intimidating, scruffy). Few articles described homeless people

positively. Newspapers predominately framed the issues thematically and there was a

lack of discussion about the intersections of race, class, and gender and humanizing

messages about people who were experiencing homelessness. Causal attributions for

homelessness were rarely included in news articles, but had a stronger presence in

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editorials. The majority of articles that discussed homeless policies focused on strategies to curb individual behaviors such as panhandling or sleeping outdoors. Supporters of restrictive ordinances relied on classist stereotypes and framed policy initiatives in terms of crime prevention/reduction and concern for public safety and health. Critics of these policies maintained that they violated civil liberties and emphasized the need for structural-level solutions, such as additional affordable housing. Although there did not appear to be a meaningful difference between "restrictive" and "progressive" cities, overall, the current analysis contributed to further understanding of stereotypes, attributions for homelessness, and media framing of homelessness.

Chapter Six

Moving Forward: Directions for Future Research and Policy Advocacy

Despite attempts by elected officials, government agencies, community groups, and homeless advocates to reduce homelessness, it continues to be a significant social problem in the United States. This study sought to understand how news media framed discussions about homelessness and the growing trend of anti-homeless ordinances. Analysis of newspaper articles and editorials revealed that stigmatizing characterizations of people experiencing homelessness dominated and favorable descriptors were infrequent. Newspaper coverage tended to frame stories about homelessness thematically, providing data and statistics about the issue broadly but this approach may deflect people's attention from the underlying causes and consequences of homelessness. When discussed, the majority of news stories about homelessness failed to provide causal explanations and emphasized the need for regulating individual behaviors via restrictive ordinances. Consequently, newspaper articles and editorials about homeless people and policies were not constructed to illuminate the complex causes and consequences of homelessness nor did they advance progressive solutions to reducing and, ultimately, ending U.S. homelessness.

Although national rates of homelessness decreased by 1% between 2009 and 2011, homelessness increased in 24 states and the District of Columbia (National Alliance to End Homelessness & Homelessness Research Institute, 2012). Homelessness is a "lagging indicator" meaning that the economic effects of the Great Recession are still escalating. The slight decrease in homelessness is attributed to

significant federal investments such as the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing program, a $1.5 billion effort to prevent a recession-related increase in homelessness (National Alliance to End Homelessness & Homelessness Research Institute, 2012). In its first year, the program assisted approximately 700,000 at-risk and homeless people and reports document that the program met its goal of preventing an increase in homelessness (National Alliance to End Homelessness & Homelessness Research Institute, 2012). However, these federal resources are no longer available and rates of homelessness are starting to climb. For example, the number of children residing in New York City's homeless shelters has increased from 16,000 in 2011 to nearly 20,000 in 2012 ("More children in homeless shelters," 2012). New York City has also experienced growth in overall homelessness (approximately 46,000 homeless in 2012, from 33,000 in 2009) despite promises by Mayor Michael Bloomberg to reduce the homeless population by two-thirds by 2009. The Bloomberg administration has eliminated much needed funding and programs that provide affordable housing.

In addition to rising rates of homelessness and cuts in vital resources and programs for the homeless, the trend of criminalizing homelessness continues to intensify in cities across the nation. During the summer of 2012, Clearview, Florida adopted anti-homeless policies that prohibit sitting or lying down in public spaces, soliciting donations from drivers, and camping, bathing, or possessing alcohol in parks. Violators are subject to fines of up to $500 and/or up to 60 days of jail time (NLCHP, 2012, para. 2). As this study demonstrates, advocates, social service

providers, and even the federal government criticize these punitive approaches. The
U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (2012) claims that such ordinances
"further marginalize men and women experiencing homelessness, fuel inflammatory
attitudes, and may even unduly restrict constitutionally protected liberties" (p. 2).
Nationwide, cities' efforts to adopt and enforce anti-homeless ordinances have gained
momentum. In many cases, communities are enacting these measures instead of
working toward addressing the root causes of homelessness and developing long-term
solutions.

It is crucial to extend the current research to investigate public attitudes and
beliefs about homelessness, anti-homeless ordinances, and its impact on potential
solutions; improve upon public discourse surrounding homeless issues; and promote
effective measures to eradicate homelessness. Additional research in these areas can
contribute to a deeper understanding of public attitudes and beliefs about issues
related to homelessness, the reframing of public discourse about homelessness, and
the mobilization of cities and states to adapt progressive and meaningful approaches
to solving the issue of homelessness.

Understanding community perspectives about homelessness. While the
current study identified major trends in newspaper coverage about homelessness and
anti-homeless policies and investigated relationships among stereotyping, media
framing, and restrictive ordinances, additional research is needed to learn how public
attitudes and beliefs about homelessness influence policies targeted at the homeless,
and how these attitudes impact support and services made available to homeless

people. Social psychologists are well positioned to build on existing knowledge by conducting survey and interview research with currently and formerly homeless individuals and those who have not experienced homelessness. Although a small body of research examines attitudes toward homelessness, limited research includes formerly or currently homeless respondents (Tompsett, et al., 2006; Toro & McDonell, 1992). Marginalized groups such as the homeless are typically excluded from discussions surrounding policies that inevitably affect them. Qualitative interviews, especially with people who have experienced homelessness, can provide powerful and dynamic data that contribute to knowledge, fuel advocacy, and humanize homelessness. It is also the case that research has found that exposure to homeless people, even indirect exposure, can improve public attitudes toward homelessness (Lee, Farrell, & Link, 2004; Link et al., 1995). Link and his colleagues (1995) found that individuals with greater contact with homeless people were more willing to make personal sacrifices to help homeless people, less likely to respond in ways that indicate a lack of empathy for the homeless, and less likely to favor restrictive policies. Survey and interview research can offer additional insight into relationships among personal experiences of homelessness, attitudes and beliefs about the issue, and support for or against restrictive ordinances.

For the current study, information about the five cities' voting trends and elected officials was publicly available. However, the newspaper articles and editorials did not clearly reveal the authors' or publications' political affiliations. Research indicates that political liberals tend to hold more favorable or sympathetic

views of homeless people than their conservative counterparts, and also that liberals

value equality among people, whereas conservatives believe that "inequality among

people is natural" (Lee, Farrell, & Link, 2004; Pratto & Cathey, 2002, p. 138). Future

research utilizing more in-depth case studies of community members in different U.S.

cities would not only help examine the political climate of the cities, but also provide

a clearer understanding of other factors (e.g., financial resources, campaign

donations, experience with or exposure to homelessness) that contribute to the

adoption of restrictive policies.

Improving public discourse and advancing progressive solutions to end

homelessness. These findings provide a starting point for learning about

stereotyping, media framing, and its influence on local policies. In a broader context,

constructive strategies are needed to raise awareness and contribute to an improved

discourse about homelessness. As it stands, mainstream news coverage frames

homelessness in ways that highlight classist stereotypes and predominately target

individual behavior. A critical framework must be developed to present a progressive

perspective—one that contextualizes people's experiences of poverty and

homelessness and emphasizes structural causes of homelessness. Changing the

discourse about homelessness may contribute to the likelihood that more liberal

homeless policies will be considered. Appelbaum (2001) demonstrated that survey

respondents were more likely to endorse liberal welfare policies when the target

group was perceived as "deserving" rather than "undeserving." Furthermore,

Appelbaum found that liberal policies were more likely to be recommended than

conservative policies when the responsibility for poverty was attributed to structural rather than individual causes. Homelessness should be presented in mainstream news media in a more contextualized way with the inclusion of homeless people's perspectives and discussion of broader structural factors that contribute to homelessness (e.g., lack of affordable housing).

Homeless advocates and elected officials have important roles to play in advancing alternative visions and promoting progressive policies. Rhode Island is one state that has taken steps to reframe public discourse about homelessness. The state has enacted a new homeless bill of rights that "prohibits governments, police, healthcare workers, landlords, or other employers from treating homeless people unfairly because of their housing status" (Klepper, 2012, para. 3). This new law not only opens up opportunities to pursue legal action, it also communicates that the homeless are entitled to the same rights as everyone else. Certainly Rhode Island's new legislation can serve as a model for other cities and states to change attitudes about homelessness.

Findings from the current study contribute to the growing social science literature examining relationships among media framing, stereotyping, and social policy and have direct relevance for advocacy efforts. Social psychologists have much to offer in terms of promoting social justice and advocating for people experiencing homelessness. Constructive solutions to homelessness lie in understanding the relationships among community members' attitudes and beliefs about homelessness, the reframing of discourse about the issue, and progressive

solutions to ending homelessness.

Table 1

"Restrictive" City Profiles

City	Population	Racial and ethnic composition of city	Homeless count	Racial and ethnic composition of homeless
Los Angeles	3.8 million	• 50% White • 10% Black/African American • 11% Asian • 49% Hispanic or Latino origin	• 43,000 (in county) • 24,925 (in city)	• 21% White • 47% Black/African American • 1% Asian • 29% Hispanic/Latino
Atlanta	515,843	• 43% White • 50% Black/African American • 3% Asian • 5% Hispanic or Latino origin	• 6,131 (in city)	• Data for Atlanta was unavailable
Orlando	227,961	• 58% White • 28% Black/African American • 3% Asian • 22% Hispanic or Latino origin	• 3,970 (in Central Florida area)	• 53% White • 35% Black/African American • 1% Asian • 15% Hispanic/Latino

Table 2

"Contrast" City Profiles

City	Population	Racial and ethnic composition of city	Homeless count	Racial and ethnic composition of homeless
Portland	548,988	• 79% White • 6% Black/African American • 7% Asian • 9% Hispanic or Latino origin	• 4,655 (in county)	• 67% White • 18% Black/African American • 1% Asian • 12% Hispanic/Latino
Seattle	594,005	• 72% White • 8% Black/African American • 13% Asian • 6% Hispanic or Latino origin	• 8,937 (in county)	• 34% White • 40% Black/African American • 4% Asian • 11% Hispanic/Latino

Table 3

Anti-homeless Ordinances, by City (from NLCHP & NCH, 2009)

Prohibited conduct	**Los Angeles***	**Atlanta[#]**	**Orlando[~]**	**Portland^**	**Seattle[%]**
Begging in particular public places	X	X	X	X	
Sleeping in public city-wide or particular public places	X	X	X		
Camping in public city-wide or particular public places	X	X	X	X	X
Sitting/lying in particular public places	X	X	X	X	X
Loitering in particular public places	X	X	X	X	

*Other prohibited acts in Los Angeles include: having/abandoning shopping carts away from premises of owner; failure to disperse; washing cars or windshields; prohibition to allow "vagrants" to use one's property.

[#]Other prohibited acts in Atlanta include: spitting; prohibition on entering vacant building; walking on highway; washing cars or windshields.

[~]Other prohibited acts in Orlando include: spitting; prohibition on entering vacant building.

^Other prohibited acts in Portland include: spitting; prohibition on entering vacant building; demolition of vacant property habitually inhabited by "vagrants"

[%]Other prohibited acts in Seattle include: failure to disperse.

Table 4

Frequency of Negative and Positive Descriptions of Homeless People, by Newspaper

Descriptions of Homeless People	News	Editorial
Substance use and/or mental illness		
Los Angeles Times	41%	N/A
Atlanta Journal-Constitution	44%	N/A
Orlando Sentinel	24%	N/A
Portland Oregonian	48%	N/A
Seattle Times	25%	N/A
Crime, theft or violence		
Los Angeles Times	21%	N/A
Atlanta Journal-Constitution	24%	N/A
Orlando Sentinel	28%	N/A
Portland Oregonian	38%	N/A
Seattle Times	19%	N/A
Other negative descriptions		
Los Angeles Times	6%	17%
Atlanta Journal-Constitution	24%	60%
Orlando Sentinel	15%	15%
Portland Oregonian	27%	26%
Seattle Times	22%	25%
Positive descriptions		
Los Angeles Times	8%	10%
Atlanta Journal-Constitution	7%	9%
Orlando Sentinel	6%	11%
Portland Oregonian	7%	17%
Seattle Times	14%	4%

Note. News articles: Los Angeles, n=153; Atlanta, n=54; Orlando, n=80; Portland, n=56; Seattle, n=59. Editorials: Los Angeles, n=48; Atlanta, n=22; Orlando, n=55; Portland, n=35; Seattle, n=24.

Table 5

Frequency of Articles with Thematic and/or Episodic Frames, by Newspaper

Frames	News	Editorial
Thematic frame		
Los Angeles Times	55%	77%
Atlanta Journal-Constitution	80%	91%
Orlando Sentinel	56%	85%
Portland Oregonian	62%	77%
Seattle Times	39%	83%
Episodic frame		
Los Angeles Times	18%	13%
Atlanta Journal-Constitution	7%	9%
Orlando Sentinel	18%	9%
Portland Oregonian	27%	20%
Seattle Times	54%	17%
Balanced frame		
Los Angeles Times	6%	10%
Atlanta Journal-Constitution	6%	0%
Orlando Sentinel	6%	6%
Portland Oregonian	7%	3%
Seattle Times	5%	0%

Note. News articles: Los Angeles, n=153; Atlanta, n=54; Orlando, n=80; Portland, n=56; Seattle, n=59. Editorials: Los Angeles, n=48; Atlanta, n=22; Orlando, n=55; Portland, n=35; Seattle, n=24.

Table 6

Frequency of Articles Mentioning Causal Attributions for Homelessness, by Newspaper

Attributions	News	Editorial
Structural		
Los Angeles Times	16%	19%
Atlanta Journal-Constitution	19%	32%
Orlando Sentinel	6%	9%
Portland Oregonian	30%	20%
Seattle Times	13%	8%
Individualistic		
Los Angeles Times	2%	2%
Atlanta Journal-Constitution	11%	5%
Orlando Sentinel	4%	4%
Portland Oregonian	0%	3%
Seattle Times	7%	4%
Fatalistic		
Los Angeles Times	3%	10%
Atlanta Journal-Constitution	0%	9%
Orlando Sentinel	8%	2%
Portland Oregonian	2%	3%
Seattle Times	2%	0%
Combination of attributions		
Los Angeles Times	18%	31%
Atlanta Journal-Constitution	11%	18%
Orlando Sentinel	7%	20%
Portland Oregonian	25%	31%
Seattle Times	3%	25%

Note. News articles: Los Angeles, n=153; Atlanta, n=54; Orlando, n=80; Portland, n=56; Seattle, n=59. Editorials: Los Angeles, n=48; Atlanta, n=22; Orlando, n=55; Portland, n=35; Seattle, n=24.

Table 7

Targeted Change for Anti-homeless Ordinance, by Newspaper

Targeted Change for Ordinances	News
Structural causes (e.g., housing, employment)	
Los Angeles Times	19%
Atlanta Journal-Constitution	11%
Orlando Sentinel	14%
Portland Oregonian	14%
Seattle Times	18%
Individual behavior (e.g., panhandling, sleeping outdoors)	
Los Angeles Times	17%
Atlanta Journal-Constitution	63%
Orlando Sentinel	56%
Portland Oregonian	48%
Seattle Times	46%
Combination of both structural and individual level change	
Los Angeles Times	7%
Atlanta Journal-Constitution	7%
Orlando Sentinel	1%
Portland Oregonian	16%
Seattle Times	7%

Note. News articles: Los Angeles, n=153; Atlanta, n=54; Orlando, n=80; Portland, n=56; Seattle, n=59.

Table 8

Frequency of Homeless Group(s) Featured, by Newspaper

Categories/groups	News	Editorial
Families and children		
Los Angeles Times	3%	4%
Atlanta Journal-Constitution	4%	0%
Orlando Sentinel	5%	2%
Portland Oregonian	3%	9%
Seattle Times	2%	13%
Veterans		
Los Angeles Times	0%	0%
Atlanta Journal-Constitution	2%	0%
Orlando Sentinel	0%	0%
Portland Oregonian	0%	0%
Seattle Times	0%	0%
Individual adults (e.g., men, panhandlers)		
Los Angeles Times	28%	15%
Atlanta Journal-Constitution	15%	5%
Orlando Sentinel	24%	11%
Portland Oregonian	12%	14%
Seattle Times	17%	0%
General homeless		
Los Angeles Times	3%	60%
Atlanta Journal-Constitution	7%	77%
Orlando Sentinel	6%	62%
Portland Oregonian	18%	51%
Seattle Times	13%	87%
Combination of groups		
Los Angeles Times	7%	21%
Atlanta Journal-Constitution	15%	9%
Orlando Sentinel	8%	22%
Portland Oregonian	16%	26%
Seattle Times	10%	0%

Note. News articles: Los Angeles, n=153; Atlanta, n=54; Orlando, n=79; Portland, n=56; Seattle, n=59. Editorials: Los Angeles, n=48; Atlanta, n=22; Orlando, n=55; Portland, n=35; Seattle, n=24.

Appendix A
Homeless Policy News Article Content Analysis

A. Coder

B. Newspaper *(e.g., Los Angeles Times)*

C. Article #

D. Article title

E. Date (of article)

F. Author (of article)

Basic Information
G. Level of analysis *(e.g., local, county, statewide, national, international)*

H. What is the focus of the article? *(e.g., homelessness and/or other poverty-related issue)*

Key Actors (informed by Bullock, Wyche, & Williams, 2001; Buck, Toro, & Ramos, 2004)
I. Are homeless people mentioned in the article? *(yes/no)*

J. Are homeless people a central focus of the article? *(yes/no)*

K. If yes, who are the homeless people featured in the article? *(e.g., families, children, individual adult, veteran, etc.)*

L. Are there non-homeless people featured in the article? *(yes/no)*

M. If yes, who are the non-homeless people featured in the article? *(e.g., government officials, law enforcement, business owners, social service providers, advocates, etc.)*

N. Who is being interviewed in the story and/or directly quoted? *(e.g., homeless person, homeless advocate, community member, government official, etc.)*

O. Pull representative quote for N, if applicable.

Description of Key Actors (informed by Bullock, et al., 2001; Clawson & Trice, 2000; Lind & Danowski, 1999; Gilens, 1996; Entman, 1995, Gans, 1995)
P. If homeless people are discussed in the article, is there mention of substance use or mental illness? *(yes/no)*

Q. If yes, what is specifically reported?

R. If homeless people are discussed in the article, is there mention of "crime," theft, or violence? *(yes/no)*

S. If yes, what is specifically reported?

T. Is there classist stereotyping? *(e.g., lazy, lacking self-discipline) (yes/no)*

U. If yes, pull quote to illustrate point.

V. Is there racist stereotyping? *(yes/no)*

W. If yes, pull quote to illustrate point.

X. Is there gender stereotyping? *(yes/no)*

Y. If yes, pull quote to illustrate point.

Z. Were actors (e.g., poor or homeless people) described as struggling and/or facing hardships? *(yes/no)*

AA. If yes, what are the specific challenges discussed?

AB. Were actors (e.g., poor or homeless people) described as overcoming adversity? *(yes/no)*

AC. If yes, what type of adversity were they overcoming? *(e.g., homelessness, unemployment, poverty, etc.)*

AD. Were positive descriptors of poor or homeless people mentioned? *(e.g., resilient, hardworking) (yes/no)*

AE. If yes, what is specifically reported?

Context (informed by Entman, 1995; Best, 2010)
AF. Were statistics about poverty or related issues (e.g., homelessness, unemployment, etc.) reported? *(yes/no)*

AG. If yes, what statistics were reported? *(e.g., homeless rates, poverty rates)*

AH. Was an increase in homelessness or poverty, or growing numbers of people becoming homeless mentioned? *(yes/no)*

AI. If yes, what was specifically reported?

AJ. Were programs to provide assistance (e.g., food banks, homeless shelters) reported? *(yes/no)*

AK. If yes, what programs were reported?

AL. Does the article include a discussion of the city's history of criminalization ordinances? (e.g., past or present practices and/or policies) *(yes/no)*

AM. If yes, describe.

AN. Are other problems/incidents related to homelessness mentioned? (e.g., businesses losing money due to street "blight," an unusual act, like a person being assaulted by a homeless person or a homeless person being attacked by a non-homeless person) *(yes/no)*

AO. If yes, describe.

Policy
AP. Were current or proposed practices/policies/ordinances/legislation related to homelessness reported? *(yes/no)*

AQ. If yes, what policies were reported? (If no, enter n/a in appropriate spaces and continue to column BB)

AR. What issue(s) or problem(s) are the policies intended to address? Describe.

AS. Do the policies aim to curb individual behaviors or address structural causes of homelessness? Or both?

AT. Describe.

AU. Who is cited as supporting and/or opposing the policies?

AV. Is enforcement and/or penalties for policies reported? *(yes/no)*

AW. If yes, describe.

AX. Are the policies described as being effective or not effective?

AY. Describe.

AZ. Are the financial costs of the policies (or affiliated measures) described? *(yes/no)*

BA. If yes, describe.

Level of Analysis (informed by Iyengar, 1990, 1991, 1996; Cozzarelli, Wilkinson, & Tagler, 2001; Entman, 1995)
BB. Does the article describe homelessness or related issues (e.g., poverty) as episodic or thematic?

BC. Overall, what kind of causal attributions are made for homelessness? *(e.g., structural, individualistic, fatalistic, cultural, or some combination)*

BD. Overall, what is the primary issue and/or problem identified in the article? *(e.g., lack of affordable housing, homelessness itself, poverty, etc.)*

BE. *1ˢᵗ issue/problem*: Who or what is the cause of the issue and/or problem? *(e.g., government, industry, economics, individuals, social policy/welfare, neutral)*

BF. *1ˢᵗ*: What are the consequences of the issue and/or problem? *(e.g., dependency, not being able to afford housing)*

BG. *1ˢᵗ*: Is the issue and/or problem described as "fixable" or is no "solution" offered?

BH. *1ˢᵗ*: If issue and/or problem is described as "fixable," who is described as responsible for solving the issue and/or problem? *(i.e., personal vs. societal)*

BI. *2ⁿᵈ issue/problem*: Who or what is the cause of the issue and/or problem? *(e.g., government, industry, economics, individuals, social policy/welfare, neutral)*

BJ. *2ⁿᵈ*: What are the consequences of the issue and/or problem? *(e.g., dependency, not being able to afford housing)*

BK. *2ⁿᵈ*: Is the issue and/or problem described as "fixable" or is no "solution" offered?

BL. *2ⁿᵈ*: If issue and/or problem is described as "fixable," who is described as responsible for solving the issue and/or problem? *(i.e., personal vs. societal)*

BM. *3ʳᵈ issue/problem*: Who or what is the cause of the issue and/or problem? *(e.g., government, industry, economics, individuals, social policy/welfare, neutral)*

BN. *3ʳᵈ*: What are the consequences of the issue and/or problem? *(e.g., dependency, not being able to afford housing)*

BO. *3rd*: Is the issue and/or problem described as "fixable" or is no "solution" offered?

BP. *3rd*: If issue and/or problem is described as "fixable," who is described as responsible for solving the issue and/or problem? *(i.e., personal vs. societal)*

Tone (informed by Iyengar, 1990; Kendall, 2005)
BQ. Overall, is the article sympathetic, unsympathetic, or neutral toward homeless people?

BR. Overall, is the article sympathetic, unsympathetic, or neutral toward the issue and/or problem? (e.g., panhandling, lack of housing)

BS. Explain BQ or BR, if needed.

BT. What is the overall tone toward the policy? *(e.g., neutral, critical, supportive)* Describe.

BU. Additional comments or quotes.

A. Coder

B. Newspaper *(e.g., Los Angeles Times, Portland Oregonian)*

C. Article #

D. Article title

E. Date (of editorial)

F. Type *(editorial or op-ed)*

G. Author (include descriptor, if applicable)

Basic Information
H. Level of analysis *(e.g., local/county, statewide, national)*

I. What is the main focus of the article? Describe. *(e.g., homelessness and/or other poverty-related issue)*

Key Actors
J. Are homeless people mentioned in the article? *(yes/no)*

K. If yes, who are the homeless people mentioned in the article? *(e.g., families, children, individual adult, veteran, etc.)*

L. Are there non-homeless people or groups/organizations mentioned in the article? *(yes/no)*

M. If yes, who are the non-homeless people mentioned in the article? *(e.g., government officials, law enforcement, business owners, social service providers, advocates, etc.)*

Description of Key Actors
N. Were poor or homeless people described negatively? *(e.g., lazy, lacking self-discipline) (yes/no)*

O. If yes, pull quote to illustrate point.

P. Were positive descriptors of poor or homeless people mentioned? *(e.g., resilient, hardworking) (yes/no)*

Q. If yes, pull quote to illustrate point.

Context
R. Were statistics about poverty or related issues (e.g., homelessness, unemployment, etc.) reported? *(yes/no)*

S. If yes, what statistics were reported? *(e.g., homeless rates, poverty rates)*

T. Was an increase in homelessness or poverty, or growing numbers of people becoming homeless mentioned? *(yes/no)*

U. If yes, what was specifically reported?

V. Were programs to provide assistance (e.g., food banks, homeless shelters) reported? *(yes/no)*

W. If yes, what programs were reported?

X. Were past or current practices/programs/policies/ordinances/legislation related to homelessness reported? *(yes/no)*

Y. If yes, what policies were reported? (If no, enter n/a)

Z. If you coded yes for column X, does the article support or oppose the practice/program/policy/etc.? *(support/oppose/not applicable)*

AA. Explain column Z, if applicable.

Level of Analysis
AB. Does the article describe homelessness or related issues (e.g., poverty) as episodic (e.g., story focused on individual or family's experience with homelessness or a specific event), thematic (e.g., general "big picture" trends), or does the focus seem balanced? Describe.

AC. Overall, what kind of causal attributions are made for homelessness? (e.g., structural *[examples: lack of affordable housing, low wage work],* individualistic *[laziness, lacking motivation, substance abuse],* fatalistic *[chance, bad luck, illness],* cultural *[organization of family, intergenerational transmission of values],* some combination, or not mentioned)

AD. Overall, what is the primary issue and/or problem identified in the article? *(e.g., lack of affordable housing, homelessness itself, poverty, etc.)*

AE. Is the main issue and/or problem described as "fixable" or is no "solution" offered? *(fixable/no solution offered)*

AF. If the article describes the issue and/or problem as "fixable," who is described as responsible for solving the issue and/or problem? *(i.e., personal vs. societal)*

AG. What suggestion, if any, does the article offer for addressing the issue or problem?

AH. Does the article criticize an individual state or local politician, national politician, judge, issue advocate, citizen, academic, law enforcement officer, or other (including editor or journalist)? *(yes/no)*

AI. If yes, who is criticized?

AJ. If yes to AH, describe how individual is criticized or provide quote to illustrate point.

AK. Does the article criticize state or local government, federal government, advocacy group, academic organization, law enforcement, or other? *(yes/no)*

AL. If yes, what is criticized?

AM. If yes to AK, describe how group/organization is criticized or provide quote to illustrate point.

AN. Does the article support an individual state or local politician, national politician, judge, issue advocate, citizen, academic, law enforcement officer, or other (including editor or journalist)? *(yes/no)*

AO. If yes, who is supported?

AP. If yes to AN, describe how individual is supported or provide quote to illustrate point.

AQ. Does the article support state or local government, federal government, advocacy group, academic organization, law enforcement, or other? *(yes/no)*

AR. If yes, what is supported?

AS. If yes to AQ, describe how group/organization is supported or provide quote to illustrate point.

Tone

AT. Overall, is the article sympathetic, unsympathetic, or neutral toward homeless people?

AU. Overall, is the article positive, negative, or neutral toward the issue and/or problem identified in column AD? *(e.g., panhandling, lack of housing)*

AV. Explain AP or AQ, if needed.

AW. Any additional comments or quotes.

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